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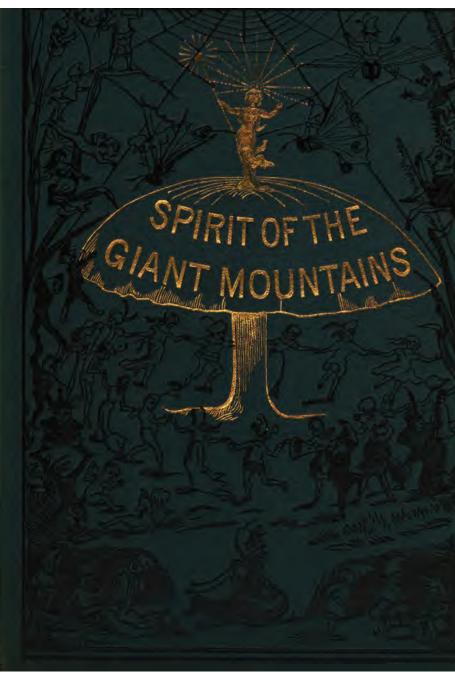
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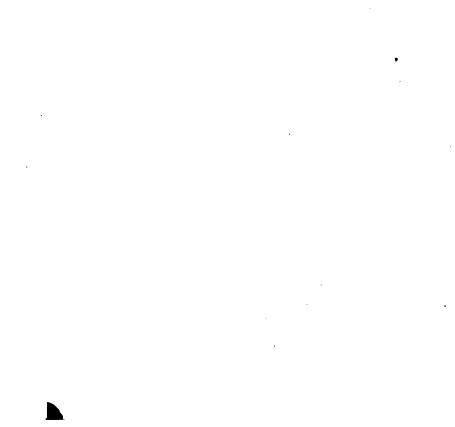




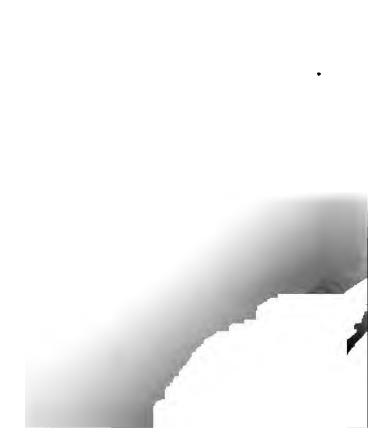




NUMBER NIP; OR, THE SPIRIT OF THE GIANT MOUNTAINS.











This young girl was sitting on the ground with her companions.

[Frontispiece,

NUMBER NIP;

OR,

THE SPIRIT OF THE GIANT MOUNTAINS.

BY

MARY C. ROWSELL,

AUTHOR OF "TALES OF FILIAL DEVOTION," "ST. NICOLAS' EVE," "LOVE LOYAL," "JEANNETTE," "UNDER THE TERROR," "HYMNS AND NARRATIVE VERSES," ETC., ETC.

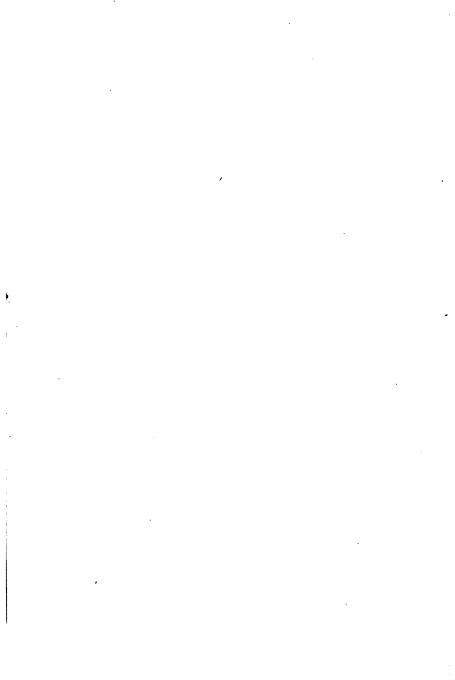
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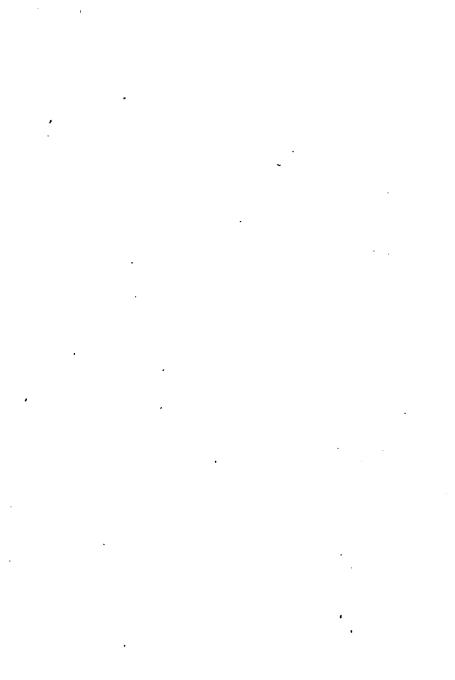






NUMBER NIP; OR, THE SPIRIT OF THE GIANT MOUNTAINS.

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so that they should not be able to see; but when that had passed, Leonora was nowhere to be found; and the poor girls filled the mountains with their lamentations, while they looked without ceasing for their stolen mistress. The king, her father, was very unhappy at her loss. He took the golden crown off his head, and hid his weeping countenance in his purple mantle. But the most unhappy of all was the princess, when she found herself suddenly in the mountain Spirit's palace. He had called it up by magic in a moment, and had it decked with more gold and precious stones than the princess had ever seen in her father's palace. She herself wore the most splendid garments. In one place there stood a whole row of chests and cupboards full of ornaments, which the Grome said were all for her. beautiful garden surrounded the palace, and the trees in it bore purple and golden fruits; and on the grass plot, where there were most extraordinary and beautiful flowers, was a cool, refreshing shade.

The mountain Spirit was very anxious that everything should please his beautiful guest, and he named her sole queen of all his possessions. He watched her every glance, so that she should want for nothing. But still, in spite of all this, Leonora was unhappy, for she wearied to return to her dear father and companions.

The Spirit noticed with pain the sadness of the lovely princess, and he thought to himself, "She pines for amusement, for mankind is accustomed to society," and immediately he rose to the fields above, rooted up from a field a dozen turnips, laid them in a pretty basket, and brought them to her.

"Lovely daughter of earth," he said, "you shall no longer be solitary. In this basket is all that you will require to make you happy in this lonely place. Take this little wand, made of many-coloured shells; touch each of the turnips with it, and give every one of them whatever form you please." So saying, he departed.

She did not hesitate long before she made use of the magic wand. "Brinhild," cried she, "my darling Brinhild, appear!" and immediately Brinhild was clinging to her knees, and embracing her beautiful mistress with tears of joy. Leonora gave herself up to the pleasure

of having her beloved companion with her. The two wandered hand in hand through the gardens, and Leonora plucked the finest fruit for her friend, and showed her her beautiful dresses, and chains, and spangles of gold and precious stones; and in Brinhild's astonishment and admiration, she almost forgot her grief. And now Leonora changed all the other turnips into her friends, so that she again had her maids-of-honour, and also her Cyprus cat and her little dog.

Having now all her old court state around her, she was very much pleased with the Spirit of the mountains, and for the first time he saw her smile. But her happiness was of short duration, for too soon she saw that the rosy complexions of her friends became pale, and that she was the only red rose amongst all the maidens. Yes; and when one morning Leonora rang her bell, there came stumping into her room upon staves and crutches, instead of pretty maidens, old women, who coughed and trembled so, that it was misery to see them; her pet dog lay dying; and the Cyprus cat could not creep along, it was so weak and old. Astonished and frightened at

this strange company, the princess fled from the room and called the Spirit, who soon appeared.

"What have you done to my poor maids and companions, wicked Spirit?" said she angrily to him. "Do you begrudge me the only pleasure I can have in this dreary abode? If you do not immediately give them back their youth and proper forms, I will neve cease to hate you; nor shall you ever see m face again!"

"Do not be angry," implored the mountain Spirit; "I cannot, with all my power, do what is impossible. As long as there were sap and life in the turnips, you could, with your magic staff, change them into whatever you pleased; but now they are withered—and then, according to the laws of nature, the human frame must also change; and I cannot alter it. But be not so sad about it, loveliest Leonora. I will quickly bring you more turnips, with which you can again have your court. Meanwhile, give back Nature her gifts."

So saying the Spirit hastened away; and Leonora touched the old matrons with the other end of her magic wand, and turned them again into withered turnips, which she threw into a corner. Then she ran as quickly as she could, to her favourite resort—a green, grassy spot in the garden—expecting to find there the freshly-filled basket. But instead of this, she saw the Spirit approaching her, apparently in great distress, and he said in a perplexed tone,

"I promised too hastily what I cannot fulfil. I have searched the whole country through in order to find just one turnip field, but all the turnips have been gathered, and are withering away in gloomy cellars. And although it is spring down here, everything above is covered with snow and ice; and we must wait three months ere I can fulfil my promise and your desire,"

Then the princess turned her back angrily upon the Spirit, and sadly shut herself into her room. She never allowed him to see her face, however much he might plead. At last, however, he hit upon another plan. He assumed the disguise of a farmer, and travelled to Schmiedeberg; there in the market, he bought a donkey, and loaded him with huge sacks of turnip seed, enough to sow a great many fields. Then he bought a meadow, and his attendant sprites lit a fire underground, so

that the heat should hasten the growth of the seed. The seed soon shot up, and the mountain Spirit hoped for a good crop. The princess herself, went every day to walk in the turnip field, but even the wondrously quick growth of the seed was too tedious for her; and her eyes lost all their brightness, and her cheeks their bloom, with anxious waiting. She had been engaged to be married to a handsome prince of a neighbouring country, and her wedding was close at hand, when the Spirit of the mountains ran away with her. Ratibor (for that was the prince's name) sought everywhere for his bride; and at last, when he found all his endeavours were fruitless, he retired into a solitary wilderness, very sad at heart. But Leonora longed to see Prince Ratibor, just as much as he longed to see her; and during the solitary days which she passed in her own apartment (for she angrily shunned the Spirit's company) she thought of a good plan to elude the watchfulness of her keeper, and to escape from her imprisonment.

In time, beautiful spring visited the mountain valleys once more; and the turnips grew fine and large. The cunning Leonora

pulled one up every day, in order to make all kinds of experiments with them; she gave them numerous different forms, apparently only for her amusement, but she had another object in view. One day she turned a little turnip into a bee, and sent him on a message to her dear prince.

"Fly, little bee, when the sun rises, to Prince Ratibor, and whisper in his ear that I still live, but that I am imprisoned by the mountain Spirit; do not forget a word of what I say; then return quickly to me and bring me his reply."

The little bee flew from the princess's finger to do as he was told; but scarcely had he commenced his flight, when a swallow hopped down, and pecked up the poor little bee. Next Leonora made a cricket.

"Hop! hop! little cricket," said she, "over the mountains, and chirp to my prince that I am waiting for a release, through his strong arm, from the power of the mountain Spirit."

So the cricket flew and hopped as quickly as he could, but a long-legged stork was walking along the same road, and snapped him up with his beak.



Looking up he saw a magpie.

[face p. 16.



The princess waited in vain for her messenger. Yet although he did not return, she was not disheartened, but gave a third turnip the form of a magpie, and said,

"Fly away, thou chattering bird, from tree to tree, until thou comest to Prince Ratibor. Then inform him of my dreary imprisonment, and tell him to be, on the third day from this, by the side of the mountain, to carry me away from the power of the Spirit.

The black and white magpie flew away, flapping his wings, from tree to tree, and Leonora watched him as far as her eye could reach.

In the meantime Prince Ratibor was wandering through the forests, mourning for the loss of his beautiful bride. One day as he was sitting under a shady oak, and sadly calling his princess, he suddenly heard an unknown voice crying; and looking up, he saw a magpie flying about amid the oak branches, and the bird immediately began saying the words that Leonora had taught him.

When Prince Ratibor heard the message he was full of joy; he hastened back to his castle, commanded a number of his horsemen to prepare for the journey, and they all set out joyfully for the Giant Mountains.

Meanwhile Leonora had everything ready for her flight. She appeared one day most splendidly attired; she wore all the costly jewels which the lord of the Giant Mountains had given her; and they shone as brightly as her eyes, which sparkled with joy, for the magpie had safely returned and informed her of all which had taken place.

When the Spirit saw the princess so beautifully dressed, he thought that she had conquered her dislike to her dismal abode; and would now live happily in his solitary kingdom.

He approached her kindly, and asked "whether she were still angry with him for having taken her from her stately home?" For the first time the princess laughed pleasantly, and told him she would now willingly remain with him, if he would fulfil just one childish whim for her.

To this the Spirit immediately agreed, and the princess laughingly leading him up to the turnip-field, told him to count the turnips there, because she wished to choose her waitingmaids and companions, and she should like to know how many were at her command. The Spirit immediately began industriously and with great care, to count the turnips; and when he had finished, wishing to convince himself that he had made no mistake, he began again. But the numbers differed, and for the third time he returned to his work.

While he was thus busily engaged, Leonora took advantage of his absence, to set her plan in motion. She chose a new, strong, juicy turnip, and changed it into a spirited horse with saddle and bridle; then she quickly sprang upon it, and galloped over heath and bushes and briars, till she came to the valley; where Prince Ratibor rushed forward to meet her, and took her under his protection.

When, after a great number of countings, the Spirit had finished his troublesome task, he hastened to find the princess, but as he could not see her in her usual shady bower, he hurried through the covered walks and foliage of the garden. He shouted her name all over the place, and at last, becoming uneasy at hearing no reply, he rushed to the top of the mountain to look all over his territory. Lo! there was his beautiful prisoner far away

in the distance, her steed just crossing the outskirts of his domains.

Trembling with rage, the angry Spirit gathered some clouds together, and hurled a flash of lightning after the fugitives; but this only reached the ancient boundary oak, and split it in twain. Beyond this oak, his power ceased; and the thunder-clouds harmlessly dissolved into a soft mist.

After he had watched them for a very long time, he tore down to his palace in a great passion; but only to destroy it, together with the beautiful garden.

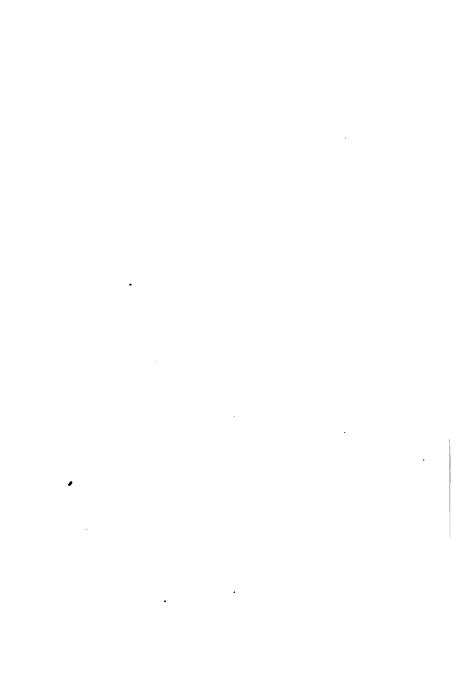
Then he concealed himself as deep down under ground as he could, there to hide his deadly hatred of mankind in the very centre of the round earth.

But Prince Ratibor led his beautiful Leonora in triumph to her father, who rewarded him with the hand of the princess, and also gave him a beautiful city, which was called Ratibor, after the owner.

This wondrous adventure which the princess had met with in the Giant Mountains, and her clever flight became known all over the country, and the inhabitants of the neigh-



Hurled a flash of lightning after the fugitives. [face p. 20.



bourhood who did not know the Gnome by his proper spirit name, gave him, in mockery, the nickname of Rubezahl, which means "turnip counter," or as we English folks call him, "NUMBER NIP." *

^{*} RUBEN Turnip; ZAHL, Number.

HOW NUMBER NIP PUNISHED A SCOFFER.

cunningly deceived, he never left his under world for many centuries. At last, however, the length of time and the loneliness became too oppressive; and as for this reason, he was in a very bad humour, a Spirit of earth, who had remained with him out of kindness, in his solitude, proposed that they should make a pleasure excursion together up to the Giant Mountains.

Number Nip at first wrinkled up his brows at the notion, but after a while he consented; and the journey was accomplished in the space of a minute, for the mountain Spirit was able, through the power of his will, always to be exactly where he wished; and accordingly the two found themselves in a shady spot, which to this day is called "Number Nip's Pleasure Garden." Thence he looked down on the valley below, where cities, and towers, and convents were spread out before him. At this sight his old hatred of mankind awoke within him, and laughing bitterly, he cried:

"Miserable worms of earth! which have deceived me with mockery and scorn, now you shall repent; for I will plague and worry you, so that you shall think with terror and fear on the Spirit of the mountains."

Scarcely had he spoken these words, when he heard voices in the distance. Three young men were wandering over the mountains, and the most daring of them cried out in a jeering tone, "Number Nip! Number Nip! come down, thou maiden stealer!"

The Spirit was enraged at this scoffing, and he called the storm-wind through the pine-trees to destroy the poor wretch who had shouted so lustily; but he chanced to consider that such a terrible instance of his vengeance would frighten all travellers away from the mountains, and then there would be no opportunity of continuing his

savage games. So for the moment he let the offender go in peace; but took care to remember to punish him later.

At the next cross-road the young man separated from his companions, and arrived safely at Hirschberg, which was his native town. Number Nip followed him to the inu, and there left him, resolving soon to return.

He went back to his mountains, and planned a way by which he could revenge himself on the mocker. Walking along he met a Jew, who was going to Hirschberg. This man, who was very rich, Number Nip looked upon as a likely instrument of vengeance for him. So he assumed the form of the young man who had called him by the mocking name of maiden stealer: and while he walked some little way with the Jew, and talked in a friendly manner, he led him, without the Jew's remarking it, into a thicket, where he attacked him, threw him down on the ground, and robbed the Israelite of his purse, which contained a large quantity of gold and jewels. Then, after he had belaboured him soundly, he left the poor plundered man lying half dead in the bushes, and disappeared.

When, after some hours, the Jew had recovered from his fright and ill treatment, he cried loudly for release from the briars and thorns, which held him fast bound, hand and foot.

Then a venerable man approached him, who appeared to be some respectable citizen. When he saw the Jew in such a miserable plight, he set him at liberty, and gave him every possible help, and after refreshing him with wine, led him to the door of the very inn which the young man had previously entered (this inn, the stranger told the plundered Jew, was the cheapest) and giving him a little money, left him.

How astonished was the Israelite when heentered the inn parlour, and saw his molestersitting quite contentedly at the table, drinking wine! He could scarcely trust his eyes, for the rascal was as happy and light-hearted, as if he had the clearest conscience in the world.

Without speaking a word, the robbed man seated himself in a corner, and pondered how he should regain possession of his property. Being, at the same time, more and more

convinced that this was the robber, he went secretly to the judge, and told him what had occurred. Immediately the judge sent men with spears and staves to the inn, which they entered, and brought the supposed criminal before the court of justice.

"Who art thou?" asked the judge, "and from whence comest thou?"

The young man replied with great frankness, and not in the least as if he were frightened,

- "I am a respectable tailor, and my name is Benedix."
- "Have you not attacked this Jew and robbed him of his money?"
- "I have never seen the man before. Neither have I attacked, nor robbed him of his money.

 I am a respectable tradesman, and no thief."
 - "Show your certificate."

This is a sort of letter which, in Germany, a tradesman carries to prove his honesty.

Benedix confidently opened his knapsack, in which he kept his certificate; but when he put in his hand, something jingled like gold.

At this sound the attendants also thrust in their hands, and drew out a heavy purse, which the happy Jew recognised for his own. And now, there stood Benedix, stricken dumb with amazement; his knees trembled, and he became as white as chalk. Not a syllable could he say in his justification.

"Miscreant!" angrily cried the judge. "Can you still deny your crime?"

"Have mercy, my lord," implored the poor youth; "I call Heaven to witness that I am innocent, and know nothing of the robbery."

"You are convicted," answered the judge.
"The purse speaks clearly enough for your crime; only confess before torture compels you to do so."

The terrified Benedix however, could do nothing but repeat that he was innocent; but when the poor fellow saw the rack and all the instruments for his torture, he confessed, although he knew nothing about it.

The trial now began, and Benedix was condemned to be hanged. The people who were in court, loudly praised the wisdom and justice of the judge's sentence, but loudest of all was that citizen who had released the Jew, and was now in the hall.

The man was, as you may guess, no other than Number Nip, who had secretly placed the Jew's money in the knapsack of the unfortunate tailor in order to revenge himself for his mockery.

In the meantime a clergyman was brought to the poor sinner to prepare him for death; but when he found Benedix lying unconscious, he considered it necessary that his sentence should be postponed, because it was impossible to converse with a man who was insensible, and so the council granted him a reprieve of three days.

When Number Nip heard this, he went sullenly back to his mountains, there to await the time. During these three days, as he was wandering about the neighbourhood, he found a young woman lying under a tree weeping. Her dress was poor, but very neat and clean; and her hands seemed accustomed to hard work. Now and then she dried her eyes with them, and sighed so heavily that even Number Nip was moved. So he again took the form of a citizen, and approaching the young woman, asked her why she wept so sadly.

"Ah!" said she, "I am a miserable creature indeed! and have the ruin of a good young man to answer for."

The Spirit was astonished.

"How," he asked, "can that be? Your coun-

tenance looks so good, and you to be full of wickedness? But, truly, all mankind is wicked and deceitful."

"Ah, sir, there you are wrong. Benedix is really a good, honest man, and has no false heart. I have been the cause of his ruin and death, for he is doomed to die by the hangman. Benedix is my husband, and we have scarcely been married a year; but our business did not prosper, and we suffered cruelly with hunger and sorrow. Very often I was sad and discontented; and worst on Sundays, when I saw my neighbours walking in nice clothes to church, while I was forced to sit, needle in hand, mending and patching our old garments.

"He was patient through it all; but so much did my discontent distress him, that one day, he strapped his bundle on his shoulders, and said 'I will go into the Giant Mountains, where I have relations. Very likely they will lend me a few thalers, with which I can buy a field. Then, at any rate, we shall have some corn for bread; and perhaps it will also buy you a new cap or a gown.'

"Good Benedix! Then he set off, consoled and quite happy, to Hirschberg.

"But my sinful discontent has tempted him to steal others' riches, and for my fault he has now to suffer a terrible death. I cannot survive him, and I am going to take a last farewell of my poor husband; but fatigue and sorrow have robbed me of all my strength, before I am half way there."

Number Nip was touched by the anguish and sorrow of the woman; and for her sake, he forgot the vengeance he had sworn to wreak upon her husband.

"Be comforted," he said, to the weeping wife.
"You shall have your Benedix again, before the sun sets. Know also, for your consolation, that he is innocent, and has not committed the robbery. But remember, after this lesson, to be more contented with your lot; for you know how much better it is to be poor and innocent, than rich and guilty."

"Ah, sir!" cried the woman sinking upon her knees before him, "God will reward you for thus consoling me. Indeed, you are a good angel whom God has sent me, although I am not worthy of such kindness; since, for the sake of earthly comfort and riches, I have risked my soul's salvation."

"Nothing of the kind," said Number Nip. "I am no angel, but a citizen of Hirschberg. I have many friends amongst the judges there, and they shall soon deliver up your husband safe and sound. Only go home, and be of good cheer."

So the poor woman returned thankfully to her home, and her soul was full of joy. Then Number Nip assumed the form of the clergyman who was to prepare the wretched sinner for death, and went to the prison. Oh! how sad and cast-down he found the poor tailor! For a long time he conversed with the prisoner in a serious manner; then he said,

"I am more and more convinced that you are innocent, my son; but I do not know how to help you, for your witnesses are so strong, and justice desires some sacrifice. If there were only means to release you, I would not hesitate one minute. I have thought of one way. You shall change clothes with me, and then leave the prison. My long robe will deceive the gaoler, so that he will readily open the door for you. Here is a loaf for you to eat on your way. Now hasten home to your wife as fast as your legs will carry you."

"But, my kind sir," said Benedix thoughtfully, "you will get into great trouble and suspicion if you aid my flight. Perhaps at last they may torture you; and far sooner would I die than have that happen to so good and pious a man as you are. If I am innocent of the theft, I deserve punishment for many other sins, and would rather suffer it than have your death heavy on my conscience."

The Gnome was much astonished at Benedix's noble feeling, and rejoiced that he could make amends for all the injury he had done him.

"Do not fear for me, my son," he replied.
"My position will shield me from such a punishment; and besides, I have many powerful friends and relations in this town, who will not allow any one to harm me."

Poor Benedix was very happy at the hope of coming off unscathed from such danger, and quickly rose up, with many thanks to noble Number Nip, and left the prison. But his heart felt faint at telling a lie, and when he passed the turnkey, his teeth chattered, and his knees knocked together, for fear he should recognize him; but at

last he got safely out of the town, and before sunset he was with his wife.

What joy it was to her to see her darling Benedix safe and well again! First, they both thanked God for his wonderful deliverance, and the next thing Benedix thought of, was a good meal, for after all the danger he had gone through, his hunger was very sharp. So his wife hastened to fetch him all she had in her poor kitchen, and Benedix cut open the loaf which the good father had given him for his journey. But lo! when the knife was put in, it made a strange noise, and a lump of shining gold fell out upon the table. Now, for the first time, Benedix and his wife discovered who had been their generous benefactor, and they thought of him with grateful hearts.

Ere long they left home to go to Prague, where Benedix purchased a beautiful house, and soon became well known and respected. His wife enjoyed the prosperity for which she had so long wished, but she did not misuse her riches, for instead of dressing herself in fine clothes, as had once been her desire, she was very charitable to the poor. Benedix remained good and honourable, as he always

had been, which helped him not a little in bringing good custom to his business.

Meantime the third day after Benedix had left Hirschberg, the supposed criminal was to be led to the gallows. Many thousands of people assembled to witness the tragedy; but when the hangman had done his duty, the delinquent struggled so terribly, that the people attempted to stone the executioner for giving him so much pain. However, in a little while, all was still; the limbs of the corpse stretched out, and the crowd dispersed.

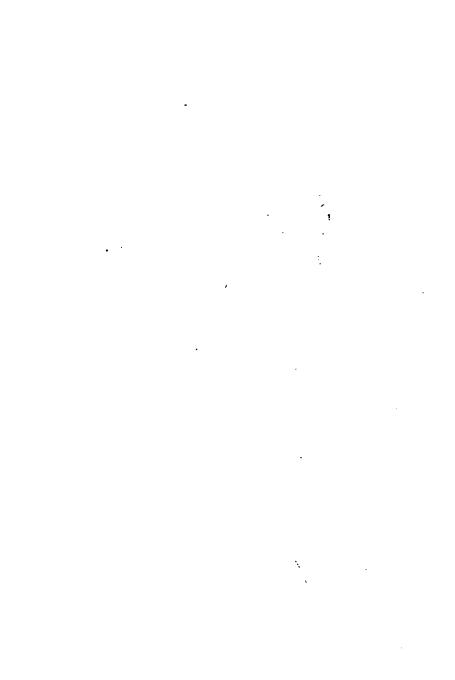
But the next morning some peasants came to the town, who said that the hanged man still lived, for he was moving his hands and feet.

Then the learned council sent a deputation to the gallows, to learn the truth, and what did this wise deputation find instead of the delinquent? A bundle of straw, clothed in old rags, like the scarecrows which you often see placed in fields to frighten away the sparrows. Everybody was very much astonished at this, and shook their powdered heads so much, that the powder flew all about.



A bundle of straw, clothed in old rags like the scarecrows.

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At last after a great deal of consideration, they ordered the straw man to be taken down; and spread the report that during the night, the heavy wind had blown the little thin tailor from the gallows over the walls of the town.

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THE LOAN.

PEASANT who had a wife and six children, became, through many great misfortunes, so poor that very often he knew not how to obtain bread for his family.

One day he said to his wife:

•"You have some cousins in the mountains. I will go to them; perhaps God will open their hearts to lend me a hundred thalers, which would release us from this miserable poverty."

"God grant they may," said his wife, but with little hope in her voice, for she knew how her cousins had never troubled themselves a scrap about her.

Early next morning the peasant set out, and walked all day, until at last he arrived, very weary, at his cousins' house, when he told them of his distress, and implored their help. But they all sent him off with hard, bitter words, and he was compelled to listen to many sharp speeches from the people, such as "people who never laid up for a rainy day deserved to be poor," and the rest of it.

With a heavy heart he turned homewards again, and when he came to the mountains he was terribly oppressed with agitation and fear. His journey thither had lost him two days' wages, and now he felt so weak, that he was certain he should not be able to work the next day.

At home his sorrowful wife was expecting him, with six hungry children, and he should arrive empty-handed—no money, no bread—Oh! how was his heart to bear such misery! The poor man pondered and pondered how he could obtain relief. All at once the stories of the mountain Spirit occurred to him.

"I will seek him," said he; "perhaps he will listen to my sad tale."

So he cried out,

"Number Nip! Number Nip!" and immediately a sooty charcoal burner stood before him, with a great stick in his hand. He had such a wild, ragged beard and such glaring

eyes, that the peasant did not for a moment doubt this was the Spirit, and he had to gather up all his courage to make his request.

"I have not called you out of curiosity," began he, "but from distress and sorrow. Dear lord of the mountains, I implore you to help me in my trouble."

And then he told him about his wife and children, and of the pitiless cousins, and begged most earnestly of Number Nip that he would lend him the hundred thalers, which he said he would repay with interest in three years, when he hoped to be much richer.

"How! Am I a usurer?" asked the mountain Spirit, angrily. Go to men, your brethren, borrow of them as much as you can, but leave me in peace, and never call me again. If you do, it will be as much as your life is worth!"

The peasant was not terrified at these cruel words, but pictured the misery and want of his family in the most glowing colours.

"If you will not help me, at least strike me dead with your stick, so that I may no longer be a witness to sufferings which I cannot alleviate."

Number Nip stared at the peasant, and then lifted his heavy stick high in the air, as though he were on the point of striking him dead with one stroke; but suddenly stopping, he commanded the man to follow him. They walked on, through thick brushwood and trees, until they came to a valley closed in on all sides by rocks; at one end there was the entrance to a cavern, into which no daylight could enter; but there was a little blue flame that sprang out of the earth, and illumined the stony walls with an unearthly glow. With the exception of an iron chest, the cave contained only an open pannier, filled with newlycoined thalers.

"There! take the money, as much as you require, and, if you can write, you may make me out a bond for it," said Number Nip, as he took paper and writing materials from the case.

The peasant meantime, with great conscientiousness, counted one hundred thalers, and no more. Then he wrote the bond as well as he was able, and Number Nip locked it up in the iron chest.

"Now go," said he, "and make good use of the money. Remember the way to the

entrance of the rocky valley, and do not forget the day of payment, for I am a very strict creditor. Here, also, is something for your children, which has nothing to do with the bond."

So saying, he plunged his hand deep into the pannier, and gave the happy father so much, that he could scarcely hold it all. He left the mountain spirit with a grateful heart and found his way out of the rocky valley, taking great care to notice the path, and hastened home strengthened by the wings of joy.

His wife was sitting sorrowfully beside the empty hearth when he entered the room; she knew how little poverty could reckon upon wealthy relations, and she scarcely had courage to look her husband in the face, for fear of reading disappointed hope written there. With what glad surprise her heart beat, when the peasant opened his wallet, and took out of it meat, sausages, and white bread and biscuits for the children.

"Your cousins," said he to the astonished woman, "not only received me kindly, but have also lent me all the money I asked them for."

Then his wife was much more surprised, and thanked the merciful God in Heaven Who guides men's hearts as the water brooks.

And now a new life seemed to dawn in the peasant's dwelling; he bought seed, and sowed some patches of ground, and he also bought two cows. There seemed a charm in the mountain Spirit's money. Soon the small plot of ground was increased to a fine meadow and a field of wheat. For miles round, no produce was so good as that which came from this peasant's fields. Better cows were nowhere to be seen, and the good man succeeded so well, that he was soon able to put by some money.

Meanwhile pay-day was approaching, so the peasant said to his wife and children:

"Put on your holiday clothes. Jack may harness the horse, and we will go and pay our cousins the money which they have lent us for these three years." It was no small delight to the children; while their mother was pleased to be able to show her cousins how happy they had made them.

When they arrived at the Giant Mountains, they stopped the cart, and all of them got down, partly to make the burden lighter for the horse,

as the father said, and partly to show the children a pretty shady path. But they all remarked that their father looked very carefully about him, as they entered the forest's deepest shadows, and his wife at last anxiously inquired:

"Have we come the wrong way?"

Then the peasant related to her and the children how unkindly their relations had dismissed him, and how the mountain spirit had pitied and helped him. At first, when they heard that Number Nip had lent them the money, they were frightened; but when he bade them remember how happy the mountain Spirit had made them, they thought no longer of fear.

After this the peasant went farther on alone, in order to find out the entrance to the rocky valley, but although he knew he was in the right place, he could not find it anywhere. He shook the money in the purse, for the Spirit to hear the sound, and appear, so that he might pay him at once. But no one was visible.

Quite despairing he came back at last; and so his wife and children sat down with him and waited for many hours. Then at last he called the Spirit by that mocking name, which, when he heard it, he seldom left unpunished; and when, after this, Number Nip did not appear, he resolved to leave the money under some piece of rock, where he thought the lord of the mountains must find it.

Just as he was going to put this idea into execution, a mighty whirlwind arose, while clouds of dust and withered leaves flew about, and the children, who had caught sight of a piece of paper, which was blown hither and thither by the wind, ran about for a long while after it. One of the boys at last caught it, and as it was such beautiful white paper, he brought it to his father. Judge of the good man's astonishment when he recognized his own bond, at the bottom of which was written, "Repaid by gratitude."

"Now my benefactor knows that I have honestly kept my word, and wished to pay my debt," joyfully cried the peasant; "and that is far better to me than the present of the money. But no one shall ever dare speak again in my presence against Number Nip; for without him, I should now be sunken in poverty and distress."

He now wished to go to the cart and return home, but his wife earnestly begged of him to go to her miserly cousins, and shame them well for their unkindness.

When they arrived in the village, they were no longer to be found. One was dead, and the other was driven away from his house for some fraud which he had committed; but our peasant remained industrious and simple-hearted, leading a quiet, contented life, and always helping his neighbours in distress, so that he became more and more beloved and honoured by all who knew him, while his prosperity increased; and his descendants still dwell in the mountains.

THE WICKED STEWARD.

death, lost both his wife and child. This made him so miserable that the world no longer afforded him any pleasure. He was very desolate in his castle. If he rode out to hunt, the forest seemed too narrow for him; wine did him no good, and he shut his ears to the comforting words of his relations. At last he resolved to leave his home for a few years; so he filled his purse with gold, ordered his faithful servant to saddle his horse, and delivered up his estate to his steward Lutz, and set off on his journey.

While the knight had ruled his dominions, his villagers and retainers had led a happy life, but now all was changed. The steward Lutz commanded the older people of the village which belonged to the castle to appear before him, and

told them that from that time they were to pay double tribute, and that they must work for him five days in the week instead of three. Then without listening to their remonstrances, he ordered them to depart. For the first time the people saw what a wicked man the steward (who had been so humble to all when the knight was at home) really was.

When they reached the castle door, they looked sadly at each other, and shook hands with heavy hearts, and then all went their ways to tell the sad news to the rest. The women, when they heard it, wept and lamented, and the men were angry and indignant; but they determined to wait quietly a little while, and see what would come of it.

They commenced as usual to work in the steward's ground for three days, and on the fourth day, considering that they had done enough, they began to work in their own fields. But in the middle of the day came the steward Lutz, with a number of armed men, into the village, and heavily flogging them, drove the peasants into the fields belonging to the castle. He threatened also to punish them severely if he again found them disobedient; and when they

desired to see his authority for demanding such unreasonable service, he raised his sword, and said, "See! here is enough authority for you."

So the poor peasants were compelled to neglect their fields; and then what they feared came to pass. The cultivation of their ground being neglected, it yielded nothing wherewith to pay their tribute, especially now that was doubled.

So the aged men went to the steward, and implored him on their knees to retract his harsh commands; but Lutz hunted them out of the castle with a whip. It was heartrending to see the old men with their white silvery hair so unkindly treated. When the peasants were not able to fulfil these unmerciful commands, and the time came to pay and they had no money, the hard-hearted Lutz took their cattle from them, and paid himself in that way.

At this, a young peasant accusing the steward of his wicked doings, Lutz made his servants seize him and bind him fast to the tail of his horse and he was dragged to the castle, and thrown into one of its dark dungeons, where poisonous worms and toads crawled about.

When this was known in the village, all the peasants groaned and lamented, but most of all

Anna, the bride of the young fellow, who had drawn down the steward's vengeance upon himself. No one could console her, and she wandered away crying into the forest.

There she met a tall knight, who was clothed from head to foot in glittering steel. Anna shrank back at the unexpected apparition; but when the rider (for he was on horseback) lifted his visor, and she saw a noble, manly countenance looking kindly at her, she gained courage.

"Why do you weep, my child?" asked he, in such a sweet tone that Anna felt wonderfully comforted; and she opened her whole heart, and told him the history of the steward from beginning to end.

The knight listened to it attentively, and then told her to summon all the elders from the village, and that he would wait for them at the chapel before the castle.

Anna hastened to obey his command, and, before the hour glass had been twice turned, all were at the appointed spot.

"Dear friends," began the steel-clad knight, "I have heard of the wickedness of Lutz towards you, and as I am a wandering knight, ever

fighting against wrong, and succouring the oppressed, I will give you also your rights again. Go, call together your young men, that I may lead them to storm the steward's castle."

How was it that such wise and sage old men should immediately place such implicit faith in the strange horseman? But it seemed to them as though they must obey him, and they hastened into the village to make known the knight's intention. Then old and young took up their arms, which for the most part were only staves and hayforks, and they hastened to the chapel where the knight was awaiting them. None who were able to swing a cudgel remained behind. When all the villagers were assembled, the rider addressed the multitude.

"If you have any courage in your hearts," he said, "follow me with perfect confidence. I will conquer the castle for you, and treat the steward as he deserves. But whoever is afraid, let him stay at home."

Then the peasants shouted, and cried, "Lead us!"

So they hastened towards the castle, the knight, in his glittering armour, at the head of the brave troop.

When they had reached the castle, the knight called out to Lutz, in a voice of thunder, to show himself upon the ramparts. The steward immediately appeared, merely from curiosity, and he looked maliciously down upon the knight, who cried,

"Surrender, Lutz! and do not hesitate longer than it will take twelve grains to run through the hour glass."

Oh, how the steward mocked and laughed at them! He called the knight a roving thief, and the peasants, criminals escaped from the gallows. Then he disappeared in a tremendous passion, and commanded his servants to drive the mob away from the postern.

Next there came a shower of arrows down upon the peasants. But, ah, wonderful!—the deadly instruments missed their aim, and at the same moment, the stranger knight raised his immense battle-axe, and clove the door of the castle with one stroke. Then waving his powerful sword high in the air, he rushed in.

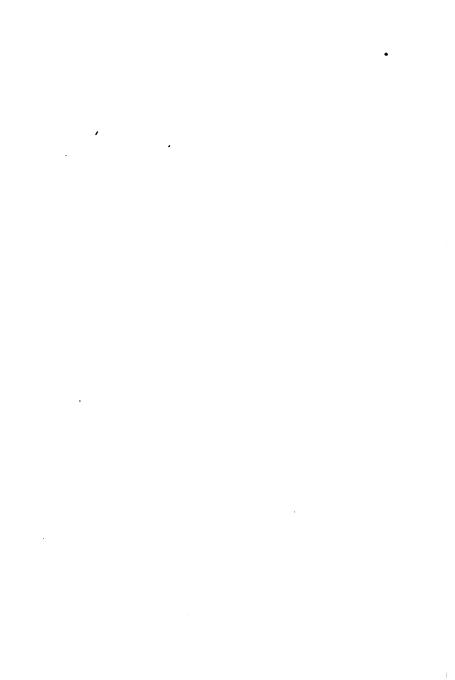
A marvellous courage seized the peasants, and, shouting loudly, they followed him.

In vain was all opposition from the steward's men. The battle-axe destroyed their ranks like



Lutz had hidden himself.

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lightning, and they threw their arms away and shrieked for mercy.

Lutz had hidden himself, but he was soon found, for his own people betrayed him; and after the young peasant had been released from his dungeon, the steward's servants were banished from the place.

After this the stranger drew forth a document which contained news of the death of the lord of the castle. He had bequeathed his possessions to the knight, because he had once saved his life in the crusades.

Now the stranger might have become their new master; but he bestowed the castle and estates belonging to it on the young man who was to be Anna's husband; only, on condition, however, that he did not treat the peasants as slaves, but respected and guarded their privileges. Thus the gift was so disposed of, that their fear and anxiety were at an end. All this was finally written down, and then signed by the knight.

When this had been done, the new lord of the castle was married to Anna, and the knight gave them many beautiful presents, although no one could tell where he got them from so quickly.

Once more admonishing the peasants to live peacefully, he commanded the trembling Lutz to follow him, and departed from them in a manner which roused the curiosity of the peasants not a little. A large cloud suddenly descended, and bore the good knight, along with Lutz, far, far away. Then the peasants knew that it must have been Number Nip who was their deliverer, and they watched the cloud till it floated to the top of a mountain and disappeared.

The new lord of the castle was brave and kind-hearted, as the favourites of the mountain Spirit always were.

The peasants were happy, and still with gratitude and joy they relate to their children and grand-children, the wonderful legend of Number Nip and the wicked steward.

THE FLYING STICK.

with great difficulty, amongst the stony heaps of one of the most solitary of the Giant Mountains. He was obliged not without danger to spring from one precipice to another, and to climb many steep ascents. At last, however, a wild mountain peak stopped his progress.

"It is a good thing," said he, "that I have brought my staff with me, which has already served me truly for so many years." So saying, he placed it between the stones, that with its help he might jump over a brook; but snap went the stick in two, and the wayfarer sank apparently helpless into the brook beneath. But he sprang up again, although wet through, and as he was not hurt, he began to lament over the loss of his stick.

"How am I to get down from this steep mountain," cried he, "now I am robbed of my support, and at this height there is not a tree from whose branches I can cut a new one?"

Suddenly a sharp voice spoke close behind him, "What is the matter?"

A giant form, wrapped in a mantle, stood before the astonished man, who had believed himself to be quite alone in the solitary place; but the traveller having recovered from his surprise, told the stranger of his disagreeable loss.

"And that is why you are so downhearted?" said the figure, laughing in a mocking tone. "Here is my stick for you, if you are afraid to go down alone." Then the strange form glided away, and as it went down amongst the brushwood it seemed to grow larger and larger, and at last to dissolve into smoke.

The wanderer did not pay much attention to this, thinking that distance or shadow had produced the illusion. He was vastly happy with his fine new stick which the stranger had given him, and continued his way with a light heart.

When he had gone some little distance, the stick began to be very heavy, and whenever he

used it, he found on lifting it again that it had become heavier and heavier. At last it was of no use as a support to him, and with great difficulty he clambered down the steep mountain, carrying the stick in his hand. But he was forced to hold it sometimes in his right hand and sometimes in his left, it was so heavy, and at last he laid it on his shoulder, and so, panting under the growing weight, he proceeded on his way.

But presently it became so unbearably heavy that he had to rest it on the ground from time to time, and then it very often seemed as if it were rooted to the spot altogether, and he could only move it with the utmost difficulty.

Presently the thing got by accident, between his legs, and he seized it with both hands to save himself from falling. A moment after, he was riding upon the wonderful stick, which flew in terrible haste over the tops of the mountains.

Perspiration oozed from the pores of the unwilling rider's skin, and he delivered up his soul to Heaven, for how easily could this terrible steed precipitate him down among the snow caverns, where he would certainly be lost! At last as he came right over the middle of the fir-tree forest; the stick descended and stopped. He threw it away from him with a curse, and sank down, tired and half dead with fright on the moss, in the cool shade.

Scarcely had he come to his senses when he saw his old stick, which he had broken in the morning, lying whole and uninjured at his feet. Seizing it joyfully, he wandered on, until he came to a beautiful mountain meadow, which was the approach to a hospitable village close by. Suddenly it seemed as though scales had fallen from his eyes, and he knew that strange form which he had seen was the Lord of the mountains; and when he remembered many tales which he had heard of him, he did not doubt but that the stick which he had given him was made of gold, and that was why it was so heavy. Tired as he was, he went back through every brake and briar in search of it. He looked carefully into the smallest bush, but the stick was nowhere to be found.

THE ALCHEMIST.

whose warm springs were discovered by a herd of deer, there dwelt a man who was very poor. He knew nobody, and was busied day and night investigating the science of chemistry. People said that he hoped to find out the secret of making gold; and so to earn a great deal of money. For this, however, he had neglected his former trade and lavished all his wealth in chemicals, and was now become so poor, that many days he went very hungry to bed.

Often he would wander through the wild mountains behind the Kynast ruin, and late at night he would creep round this castle, of which they tell so many legends, and sometimes he lost himself in the surrounding forest. Now and then, he used to meet a man in whom he placed his confidence, and he told him why this wild spot had such attractions for him. He believed that these barren, empty caverns contained great secret treasures.

Once, as he was sadly wandering among the gloomy fir-trees of the mountain, he saw in the distance a bright flame. Towards this he went; arrived there, he saw a grated door, forming the entrance to a cavern, which was lighted up; and within which he beheld a vast heap of gold and precious stones.

The eyes of the poor man fastened greedily upon this quantity of glittering gold which was so magically shown to him. Suddenly there appeared before him the man whom he had so often met in the forest, who said to him:

"All these treasures shall be thine, only mark well the place where the cave stands. In three days thou shalt find it open ready for thee."

The trees were not very thick in this part of the wood, and the whole of the valley might be seen from it.

From the ruin of the Kynast, the tower of Hermsdorf was visible to the left; beneath in the valley was lovely Warmbrunn, and in the



He saw a grated door.

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background was Hirschberg. The stranger made him note the relative situations of these places attentively.

"Look well, so that thou mayest find this place again; for it is only thus that thou canst make thy fortune!"

The astonished recluse noted all with close attention, and went away filled with delight, but once more came back in order to be certain that he should find the place again.

"There is a medal for you," said the stranger to him, "so that you may not by to-morrow morning consider it only a dream;" and he gave him a golden medal with curious figures stamped upon it.

Then the stranger disappeared; and when the poor man looked round, the cavern also had disappeared, and he would certainly have taken it for a freak of his excited imagination, had he not still held the medal in his hand.

As he turned homeward, filled with delight, he noticed every step he took, and every now and then carefully rolled great stones on the path, and marked several trees, so as to be sure of being able to find the right place again.

On the third day he hastened to the same path, and recognised by his tokens the right way; then standing under the ruin, he looked out for the three towers of Hermsdorf, Warmbrunn, and Hirschberg. When, however, he perceived the one, a rock or a tree stood before the other, and it was in vain that he altered his standing place again and again. Dreadfully agitated, he first climbed high and then low, now moved to the right, now to the left, now deeper in the wood, and now more into the open country, but he could never see anything just the same as he saw it when pointed out by the stranger.

The sweat ran down his forehead, his heart beat fearfully, his eyes stared wildly around him. At last he cried out,

"There! now I have found it."

His countenance brightened, and his knees knocked together for joy; but the illusion only lasted a moment, for when he looked closer, there was nothing to be seen.

Thus tortured with the most fearful perplexity, he ran about the whole day, ay, and the whole night too. He never returned to his dwelling again, but wandered about quite mad for more than a year, among the rocks and caves, where he only found roots and wild berries to nourish him; and at last they found him lying dead in the wood, and the golden medal clutched tightly between his stiffened fingers.

THE WONDERFUL THALER.

3.34

T was the fête of Kirchweih, in a little village of the Giant Mountains. This feast the country people celebrate when they have collected all the produce of the fields into their barns, and autumn has shaken the yellow leaves from the trees. On that day there is feasting and joy in the poorest hut; no work is done, the little room is freshly sanded and decorated, and the good wife bakes brown cakes made out of what is gleaned from the fields. The well-to-do farmer sits at his richly-covered table, with friends and relations around him from far and near; and over fried carp and geese, stuffed with apples, they chat over the condition of their cattle and fields.

In the labourer's poorer cottage, things are not so plentiful; but even there may be seen

the "birnen bree," or baked pears on the table at which the children cast longing eyes, whilst the mother is cutting up the black meal cakes, and boils coffee at the hearth. The father, in a snow-white shirt and many-coloured Manchester waistcoat, sits before the door smoking his brown clay pipe, and spreads his blue handkerchief over his knees to protect his black leather breeches from the sun. In the evening, young and old assemble at the village inn, and dance and play at cards in the smoky room, while the children eat cakes and gingerbread.

Such then, was the feast in a prosperous village of the Giant Mountains. Music was being played out of doors, when the mother of a little boy named Friedel, washed his face, gave him a great piece of cake, and put a little copper coin into his pocket. Friedel hastened to hear the music. As he went, he saw Conrad, their neighbour's son, sitting on the grass; he had a purse full of gold in his hand which his father's guests had given him; he was shaking it with delight near his ear, and the sound seemed more pleasing to him than the sweetest music.

"Just look Friedel," cried he to his little

playmate, "This money is all mine, but I do not intend to spend one silver groschen of it; I mean to put more to it and when I am big, to buy a large piece of ground."

Then Friedel took out his copper coin, and said, "As I am not so rich as you are, I cannot buy ground, but I can buy a gingerbread man; and you shall have a piece of it, Conrad."

As the boys were talking together, a man came by wheeling a barrow. He looked a very weak old man; he had fastened a great dog with cords to the heavily-laden truck, and the poor animal was gasping with fatigue and hunger. When the old man stopped, the dog stretched himself down in the dust and moaned.

- "What is the matter with the poor animal?" asked Friedel compassionately, and went nearer to the man, while Conrad hastily hid his purse of gold.
- "He is hungry and tired," said the old man, shortly.
- "Ah, then, let me give him my cake," begged Friedel, breaking it into pieces, and giving it to the dog; the poor creature greedily swallowed the offered cake, and wagged his tail with joy. The good little boy was as

pleased as if he had himself eaten the cake, although he had not tasted a morsel of it.

"You have done the poor animal a great deal of good," said the old man; "Perhaps you would also have compassion on me! I am tired and thirsty; and a drink of beer would be very welcome to me, but I have no money wherewith to pay for it."

"Ah! there I can help you," said Friedel kindly, taking his little piece of money out of his pocket; "Buy yourself a glass of beer with that."

In the meantime Conrad had slunk away.

A kindly smile illumined the old man's face, then he looked after the other boy, who was running quickly down the street, and asked:

"Why does your play-fellow leave you so quickly? and what did he hide from me?"

"Ah, let Conrad run; he can give you nothing. Indeed I think he wants more before he has enough to buy himself a house and fields, and be a rich farmer."

"And what would you have done with your money?" asked the old man.

"Oh, I should have bought a gingerbread

man; but I would much rather that you should buy a glass of beer with it."

"You are a good boy," cried the stranger, smiling. "Come and show me the way to the inn, for I am quite strange here."

Friedel walked by the barrow. Presently the rotten cords which fastened the dog broke, and the animal ran far away, swift as the wind.

"Let him go," begged Friedel of the old man, who was running after him to bring him back. "I will lend you a hand through the village, and your dog Sultan will soon return." So saying, he took hold of the ropes, and dragged the heavy cart so quickly along, that they soon arrived at the inn.

There they stopped, and while the old man drank his beer, Conrad came creeping in, and said—

"You are a great fool, Friedel, to give your money to the old drunkard. Now you cannot buy any gingerbread."

"But I have made the old man very happy," replied he. "And if I had more money I would willingly give it to him to do him good."

Conrad went sulkily away; for if Friedel

had kept his money to buy gingerbread, he would have given him a piece; so now he himself went up to the table where it was sold, and gazed with longing eyes. At last greediness conquered avarice; he bought himself a little gingerbread cake, on which he spent a whole silver groschen. But when he bit it, he bit only into the air, and although the cake became smaller the oftener he bit, still he got nothing inside of him.

In the door of the bar stood the old barrow man, nearly laughing himself to death to see the frightened and yet malicious face of Conrad, who now began to be very angry, and declared that the woman who sold the ginger-bread should give him another piece, because he had had nothing for his money; and the woman, who thought the boy was merry, at first gave him some more, but at last she became impatient, and treated him to several hard boxes on the ear instead.

A crowd of children now gathered round the dispute at the gingerbread table, and they all laughed at Conrad, who left the inn ashamed and angry.

Friedel wanted to run after and comfort

him, but just then the old man called to him, begging him to show him the way to Buchwald, where he had to be before night. It was already getting dark, and as all calling and whistling would not bring the dog back, Friedel again fastened himself to the harness, and dragged as fast as his strength would permit him. The old man's countenance became more and more bright and pleased, and when they arrived at the village, he thanked the boy, told him to go home, and gave him a great piece of silver (the worth of which, however, Friedel did not know), and said to him:

"If you spend this in a proper manner, you will become rich and happy through it." Then he took the barrow and quickly went away, and when Friedel ran after him to thank him, he could not see him anywhere.

"That was a droll fellow," thought Friedel, as he hastened home. He had become very warm through carrying such a great load; but the autumn wind now blew keenly, and the little boy had no jacket on, so that he was glad when he had passed the bridge, at the end of which stood his father's cottage. There sat Conrad, still very sad, and with swollen

eyes. Friedel felt very sorry for him; he gave him his hand, and said:

"Do not be so sad about the stupid gingerbread, and the two or three blows which you got."

"Yes," muttered Conrad. "And it was all your fault, for no one but that spiteful old man can have played that trick on me with the gingerbread. Why will you always go running after beggars?"

"Do not think such a foolish thing, Conrad," replied Friedel. "The old man was certainly not spiteful; only see what he has given me for a plaything!"

Conrad became animated in a moment, for envy and avarice reigned in his bosom. He knew in a moment that it was a thaler which Friedel had mistaken for a toy, and he thought to take advantage of his ignorance.

"You might give that to me, if you were a kind boy, as people say you are," faltered he.
"I will give you some of my money for it."

"Keep your money—I will give you the thing; but now you must not be sad any more. Put on a bright face."

This was no longer difficult to Conrad; so

the two boys played a little while together, and then went home. Friedel thought no more of the old man, except to relate the adventure to his parents, for he had been taught that people should never boast of any good which they may be able to do their neighbour.

Soon after, it became rumoured in the village that Conrad's father must have found a treasure, for his wealth increased every day. He bought fields, and soon became a magistrate of the village; but avarice grew with his immense riches. Conrad was no longer permitted to play with Friedel, whose father was only a poor labourer; and thus time went on.

Many, many years passed away. Friedel had become an industrious man, and lived in the little house where his father, who was now dead, had dwelt. He earned bread for himself and his aged mother, by cultivating the little field which belonged to the cottage.

Conrad had become magistrate in his father's stead, and had the finest grounds and cattle in the whole village; but he took no pleasure in them. The rising storm clouds frightened

him, because their rain might destroy his fields. At night sleep fled from his eyelids, for fear thieves might break in while he slumbered, and steal his gathered heaps of treasure.

All this made him ill, and he wandered about like a shadow. The people hated and feared him, and he in return trusted no one. Nobody of good character would serve him, and therefore he was surrounded by rascals and vagabonds who embittered his life. And so he had no pleasure; but often envied happy Friedel, when he saw him go out into his field behind the plough, singing or whistling, and healthy and cheerful, and whose hand every one shook heartily when he walked through the village.

Once, in the middle of the night, the young peasant was called to the magistrate, Conrad, who for some days had been dangerously ill. In the dimly-lighted chamber he found the poor rich man, pale and miserable, and nigh unto death.

When Friedel entered, he stretched out his wasted hand to him, and said, in a feeble tone, "I feel that I must die, and have called you because I have on my conscience, a heavy sin

which I have committed against you. Do you remember, when we were children, the piece of money which the old man gave you? I deceived you about it, for it was a thaler, and you mistook it for only a plaything. I ran joyfully with it to my father, and told him that I had found it. The next morning I went to look at the coin, and was pleasantly surprised when I perceived a second thaler by the side of it; and as I looked, came another and another. 'This is a magic thaler,' said my father, and forbade me to speak a word about it.

"From that time our riches increased, for we took care never to part with the magic thaler; but my avaricious father never had any pleasure in his riches, even though he made mountains of money. Neither have I had any enjoyment of the wrongly-gotten treasure. I was a hard, wicked man, whom no one loved. The present of that old man, whom long ago I have known must have been Number Nip, has been my curse; and now all is over with me. It has been the same with my earned money as it once was with the gingerbread. I have not truly enjoyed anything, greedy as I once was

for it. Now it is all yours, as was at first intended; you will make a better use of it, and will do good where I have done evil. I am rich in the lucre of mammon, but poor in the riches of my soul. And now I starve for one hope of——"

A violent cough interrupted him. With a trembling hand he held out the key to all his treasures, at the same time desiring to see a clergyman. Then he declared formally that he left all his wealth to Friedel, in whose arms he died, sincerely mourned by the honest peasant.

Friedel threw the mischievous magic thaler into the deep forest brook. He spent a part of the bequeathed money on good institutions, and with his mother enjoyed the large and beautiful property which had belonged to Conrad. But even there he only considered himself as the steward of it. He was the good and benevolent guardian of all oppressed and suffering people. None went unrelieved from his threshold, and misery was changed into joy; his labours prospered, his fields bore rich fruit, and beloved by all was Friedel, the new magistrate of the village. And often, when, after an honest day's work, he sat at

the door of his beautiful dwelling, it seemed to him as though he saw the form of the old wheelbarrow man gliding by, and smiling upon him with an approving and kindly glance.

MOTHER ALICE.

HE help which Number Nip had given to people, attracted a crowd of idlers, careless landlords, and such like, and they all, partly through begging, and partly through mocking the mountain Spirit, sought to entice him to appear and listen to their complaints. For a long while the spirit allowed them to do all this in peace; for he despised them too much to be angry with them. Sometimes however, he would cheat them by causing a blue flame to appear before them, which they mistook for a sign that a treasure lay in the earth beneath it; yes, and he even let them find heavy pots, and when, with much difficulty, they had carried them home, they discovered nothing inside, but stones and shavings, where they had hoped to find gold. Nevertheless, they would not cease from plaguing him, and

at last he became angry, and poured down a heavy shower of stones upon the mob, which pretty soon sent them off from his kingdom. No wanderer ever now crossed the Giant Mountains without fear and trembling. The Spirit, however, was no more seen or heard of for a long time.

One day, however, as he was sunning himself by his garden hedge, a woman approached, who, by her extraordinary appearance, raised his curiosity. She had one child in her arms, one on her back, one she led by the hand, and a somewhat bigger boy carried a heavy basket and a rake, with which the mother collected leaves and grass for her goats.

"A mother must be a truly good creature," thought the Spirit. "She goes about with four children, and at the same time has to do that hard work."

This sight put Number Nip in a good humour, and he resolved to have a talk with the woman. In the meantime she had placed the children on a bank, while she stripped the leaves from the bushes; but the little ones got weary, and began to scream and cry. So the mother left her work, and played and laughed with them;

then at last she rocked them to sleep, and went cheerfully to her work again. But the gnats stung the little sleepers; they were again restless, and indefatigably as ever, the mother hastened to them, picked some raspberries from the bushes, and brought them to her weeping little ones. This motherly care and patience greatly pleased the spirit.

But the youngest boy would not be satisfied; he threw the berries on the ground and screamed. At last the mother's patience was exhausted.

"Number Nip!" cried she, "come and eat this naughty little boy!"

In a moment the spirit appeared in the form of a charcoal burner, saying,

"Here I am. What do you want with me?" The woman was terrified, but she soon gathered courage, and replied,

"I only called you, so that my little one should be quiet. You see it has done good; therefore I do not want you any more. Thank you for your goodness."

"Ah!" said Number Nip, "but people do not call me unpunished. I keep you to your word; give me the screamer, that I may eat him up.

I have not had such a nice morsel for a long time."

So saying he held out his rough hand for the boy. Fear gave the mother the power of a giant; and standing before Number Nip to screen her boy, she pulled his beard hard, and cried,

"You monster! before you can rob me of my darling, you must tear the heart from my body."

Such a rough salute Number Nip had not expected; but the courage and maternal love of this woman pleased him. He smiled kindly, and said,

"Do not excite yourself so much. I am no monster, and will not do your little one any harm. But give me the little fellow; he pleases me, and I will treat him like a young lord, and clothe him in velvet and satin, and he shall be a brave boy, who one day shall support you all. Yes, you may ask a hundred thalers for him, and I will immediately give it you."

"Ha!" laughed the woman, "my boy may please you, but he pleases me more; and the pretty creature is of more value to me than all the thalers in the world."

- "You have three other children," said Number Nip; "they are enough for you to toil for."
- "Ah, yes, they trouble me a little sometimes, but they are still my darling children, and a great comfort to me."
- "A great comfort—to have them the whole day about you, to lead, to wash, and to feed, and to hear them scream?"
- "Sir Mountain Ghost, you cannot understand; children are all the more dear to their mother, when they give her trouble, and she is obliged to work day and night for them."
- "Have you, then, no husband who can work for you—cannot he make use of his hands?"
- "Oh, yes! and I feel pretty keenly when he does use them," said the woman, with a comical expression; and she made a movement as though she were swinging a stick.
- "What!" cried the Spirit, quite astounded, "to beat such a good wife as you are? I'll break his neck for him."
- "Ah, you would have enough to do, if you were to break the neck of every wrong-headed man. Listen: Stephen is not a wicked man at heart, and it really was very distressing

to him to be obliged to close his little inn for want of money, because I did not bring him a single groschen when I married him; so now, if I want money to buy the children shoes and other necessary things, he storms sometimes louder than a heathen; for, between you and me, he is something of a miser."

"What is Stephen's trade?"

"He is a glass merchant, and is obliged, year after year, to fetch his heavy pack of glass from Bohemia. Sometimes some of the glass gets broken on the long journey, and for that the children and I have to suffer. But should not the wife bear some of the husband's trouble?"

Number Nip was now satisfied, although he felt a grudge against Stephen; but he again began to urge the mother to give him her child. She, however, no longer replied to him, but finished gathering the leaves into her basket, fastened the youngest child to it, and turned her back on the mountain Spirit. But as she could not lift the heavy basket on to her head, she turned once more to him,

"Will you be kind enough," begged she, "to raise the basket for me? and if you want to do

another kind action, give the child that pleases you so much, a groschen to buy him a roll."

Number Nip helped her with the basket. "If you don't give me your little one," said he, while so doing, "he shall have no money from me."

"Just as you will; the child will grow healthy and strong without rolls," replied she sharply, and walked on.

But the farther she went the heavier was her basket, and at last it became so weighty, that she was not able to continue her way. She took out some of the leaves to make her burden lighter; but she had not gone far when the basket became heavier than ever, and she was compelled to take out more of the contents. It was a perfect puzzle to her; she had often carried a much heavier weight, without being so tired. When at last she got home her arms were almost broken by the heavy load. Then she had to attend to her cottage; so she threw the goats their food into the stable, gave the children their supper, rocked them to sleep, and at last she lay down herself, to enjoy a pleasant slumber.

Early dawn awoke the industrious woman to

her new day's work. She fetched her milk pails, and went to the goat stall. But what a terrible sight did she behold there! darling, faithful animal, the old goat, lay quite stiff and dead in the stall, and the two young ones were breathing only very feebly. The poor woman had in all her life never met with so great a misfortune, and she wept bitterly. "Oh!" cried she, "misfortunes never come singly. How Stephen will storm, and how wild he will be when he comes home! Now, all my peace of mind is gone, and I have no more pleasure in life!" But when she had said this, her heart smote her. "Were the goats, then, thy only happiness, and dost thou not care for thy children?" she asked herself. Then she was ashamed of her cowardice, and said, "So be it. I thank God that he has left me my children safe and well. This is harvest time; I can go and help reap in the fields, then I shall be paid something, and if I spin industriously during the winter, I shall be able to buy another goat by the new year."

When she thus meditated, she was comforted, and drying her eyes, she looked once more at the poor goats, who were now all three dead.

Suddenly something glistened in the straw at her feet; she picked it up; it was a leaf that shone like gold. She ran in great haste to a Jewish woman who lived near, and who declared it to be gold, and gave her three thalers for it.

Who so happy now as the poor woman? She ran directly to the baker, bought white bread and butter for the children, and for Stephen a leg of mutton, which she intended to cook nicely for him by the time he returned home, tired and hungry, in the evening. In her joy she forgot all her troubles, she was so pleased to think that for once she could feed her children well; and they shouted and jumped, and sprang about not a little delighted, when they saw the nice white bread. Meanwhile their mother hid the dead goats, so that Stephen should not notice their misfortune when he first came home.

But who can describe her amazement, when she went by accident to the trough, and saw a whole heap of these golden leaves lying in it? Yes, and in the basket in which she had carried the fodder, there were still hanging a few. Then she comprehended why her goats had died. "They have devoured the indigestible leaves," thought she, while she ran to fetch a knife, with which she cut open their bodies, and immediately, as she had expected, great lumps of gold fell out. Then the poor woman felt so rich that she believed she should never use so much money in all her life.

She went joyfully to the pastor of the place, who was a pious man, and he consented to take care of her treasures for her.

"If I might give you counsel, my good woman," said he, "do not let your husband know anything about it; he would take all the money for himself, and give none to you and the children. I will write a letter in a foreign language, as though it came from your brother, who is far away in distant lands, and you must say he has sent you a little money. Then you can give Stephen a part, by degrees; but not all at once, for that would only get him into trouble."

The good woman was very well content with this arrangement, and gave a handsome sum to the minister for the poor of the village; and she also bought a new altar-cloth for the church; for she was grateful to God for this unexpected blessing, and wished to prove it by her good deeds.

In the meantime Stephen was coming home over the mountains, with a heavy pack of glass-ware. He was very tired, and as on his way he saw a beautiful meadow, he thought he would lie down a little while and rest. There was the trunk of a hewn-down tree close by; on this he placed his pack, and then he turned to sleep comfortably in the green grass, amongst which bloomed many bright buttercups and daisies. He reckoned up what he thought to gain by the sale of the contents of his basket.

"I will buy myself a donkey in Schmiedeberg," said he, half aloud, "and he can carry my heavy load instead of me. My wife is young and healthy, and she can work for the children, so I will not give her any of my earnings this time. Besides, she has the goats; and the children can wait some time yet for their winter clothing. Next time, if I can bring a double load of glass from Bohemia, then I shall have double wages, and after that I may be able to make my donkey a horse. Then I will have a piece of ground. There is

some by my house, and my wife can work in it; she has young robust limbs. In time I will buy a little property, and then Alice and the children shall have their new clothes."

While Stephen was thus building in these air castles, a mighty whirlwind suddenly arose, which blew the basket of glass from the trunk of the tree, and all the wares lay broken into a thousand pieces.

This was the most dreadful thing which could have happened to the miserly man. Quite out of his wits, he rushed to the pieces, with the destruction of which, all his fine hopes were destroyed. Suddenly he heard a mocking laugh close by him; he looked round in astonishment, but saw no one; yet what most surprised him was, that the tree on which he had placed his load, had quite disappeared.

"Number Nip," cried he, in a rage, "you mischief-maker, you have done this to me! How have I offended you, that you treat me so? You had better come and eat me at once, you malicious hobgoblin. You wicked rascal, for you have ruined me!"

Stephen spoke these words in bitter, serious

earnest; but Number Nip neither let himself be seen nor heard.

Poor Stephen was at last compelled to gather up the broken pieces, so that he might at least sell them, and so get something to help him to begin business again. He thought and pondered how he could get enough money to buy some more glass, but he saw no way. At last his wife's goats occurred to him.

"If I only had them, and could sell them," thought he, "they would help me a great deal; but I am sure Alice would never give them to me, for she wants their milk for the children. How would it be, however, if I were to creep up to the cottage at midnight, and steal them out of the stall, and then drive them to the market at Schmiedeberg, and sell them? Then with the money I would buy some more glass. Alice would not see me. Then afterwards I would scold her well for being so careless as to allow the goats to be stolen. Yes, by this trick, I will help myself out of my trouble."

In order to accomplish his design, Stephen went as near to the village as possible; and hid himself in a bush until night came. Then he stealthily commenced preparations. He got

over the fence and opened the goat stall; the door was not bolted, as usual. He was very glad of this, for now he had found a pretext for scolding his wife for her carelessness. In the stall all was quiet. He felt the trough; it was quite empty. In his first fright, Stephen thought there had been a thief before him, and was so troubled at this idea, that he threw himself down on the straw, very sad at having lost the last means by which he could gain his livelihood.

In the meantime Alice had prepared his supper; but she waited in vain for her husband, and late in the evening she ran up the road, and looked so long for him that her eyes ached. She went back again in great distress, for she thought he had met with some accident, and she could not sleep the whole night. In the morning something knocked softly at her door. It was Stephen, who had passed the night very uncomfortably in the goat stall.

"Dear wife," said he, in most unusually loving tones, "open the door for I am tired."

Alice heard her husband's voice, and sprang like an antelope to embrace him, rejoicing to see him safe and sound. But he put his basket on the bench with a dejected air, and then threw himself down beside it.

When Alice saw him so sad, it smote her to the heart.

"What is the matter, Stephen?" she asked him gently. "Have you had some misfortune?"

With many sighs he related to her what had happened. Alice would have liked to have had a good laugh at the trick Number Nip, with such good intent, had played her husband. But when he asked about the goats, she was much tempted to plague him a little, "for," thought she, "the master of the house should think of his children first."

"You have not asked after the children yet. And do not let Number Nip's trick disturbyou. Who knows but what he may make it good."

"You may wait long enough for that," grumbled Stephen.

"Oh," replied his wife, "Unhoped for often comes. If you have no glass and I no goats, still we have four strong arms, and that is better."

"Now, God forbid," cried the miserable man.

"Are the goats really gone? then I can no longer keep the children."

"But I can!" said Alice.

At these welcome words, the minister who had overheard the conversation at the door, entered; and when he had given Stephen a good lecture on avarice, which is the root of all evil, he told him that his wife had received a rich present from her brother; and he took out the letter, from which he read that Stephen was not to have possession of the money, but that he, the pastor, should take care of it, and see that Alice and the children had a proper share.

Stephen stood petrified, and could not articulate a syllable. At last, his good wife took his hand and spoke comfortingly to him; then he resolved to be a kinder and better man, and he promised this to his wife before the good pastor. Next he begged Alice not to leave him now that she was rich. He honestly kept his word, and his industry increased the mountain Spirit's timely gift.

At last, the pastor bought a beautiful farm, where Stephen and his wife lived happy and contented all their days. The good, faithful

mother was very happy in her children. The little boy, Number Nip's favourite, became a brave soldier, and served his country with great distinction in a long war.

THE MAGIC BOOK.

MAN who by his avarice had become exceedingly rich, had no greater wish in the world than to possess a little magic book, which should teach him to make the rain or sunshine to appear according to his will, to render him invisible, and to find golden treasures in the earth.

But as he could nowhere obtain such a book, he resolved at last to beg Number Nip for one, and he hoped he would give it him immediately.

So he went to the neighbourhood of Number Nip's kingdom, and after a long time he found the Spirit sitting by the mouth of a horrible cavern, and he gave him the book which he wanted.

The man joyfully hastened home, in order to prove its power, but when he opened it, and was going to read, there was nothing inside but leaves and stalks of withered plants!

At the same moment, he heard behind him a deep voice like thunder, which said: "Learn to be content with the good things you have; and use them to a better purpose, lest they too shall wither away!"

THE FATAL PLANT.

UMBER NIP had his own herb garden in the mountains. You may see it to this day; not far from a meadow, on an overhanging rock. The mountain is very fertile, being covered with fine herbs, which from time immemorial have been used for powerful scents and essences, and the villagers also use them for tea and medicines. Amongst all these healing herbs, one is very much celebrated, and well known in the world of fairy tales and legends. This magic plant is called the spring root, and grows only in Number Nip's garden. It is beautiful to look at, and will cure the most wearisome and obstinate diseases. But as it nourishes his attendant gnomes, the spirit will only permit his greatest favourites on this upper earth to pluck it unpunished.

Once in Liegnitz, a very grand lady was

sick; she commanded that a peasant should be called to her, and she gave him instructions to go and gather a spring root out of Number Nip's garden, for which she promised to give him a handsome reward.

The gold tempted the peasant to perform the dangerous bidding. He sought for the place, and when he had entered the solitary region, he seized his spade, and began to dig up the spring root, which he immediately recognized. Whilst he was deeply busied at his work, he suddenly heard from a rock the sound of a mighty whirlwind, and then a deep voice; the language which it spoke, however, he did not understand. He looked up in terror, and perceived at the edge of the rock a giant-like and terrible form. A long white beard fell down to his feet, and a frightful large nose almost covered his face, and there were also long white hairs over his face, which flew about in the wind, and from them, and also from the heavy folds of his mantle, the storm seemed to rush out. The wild, terrible old man held a large club in his hand, and he cried out in a voice like thunder:

"What art thou doing there, miserable man?"

A shudder shook the strong limbs of the peasant before he could gather courage to reply.

"A sick woman desires a spring-root, and I am seeking for one."

Then the figure said: "You have found one, that you may keep, but beware of coming a second time!" so saying, he shook his club in a threatening manner.

The peasant fled as quickly as he could; and did not venture to look again at the fearful apparition. But when the sick lady gave him a handful of thalers for the plant, he forgot his past terror, and made himself happy with the money.

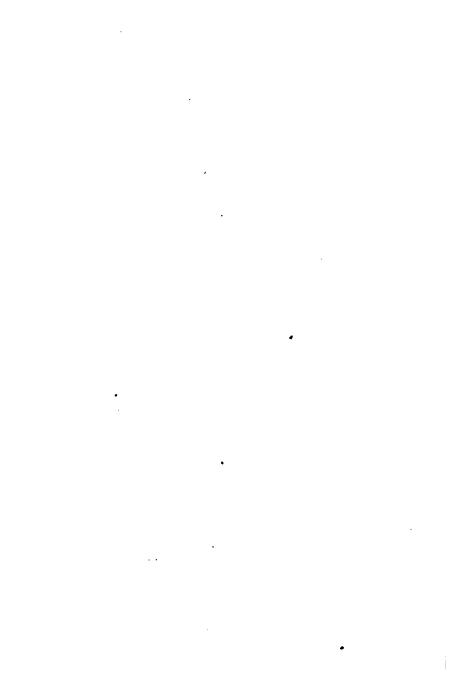
The lady was scarcely in possession of the wonderful plant, before she became stronger and better. When she saw that this would be a means of curing her, she ordered the peasant to her again.

"Will you," said she, "fetch me another spring-root; you shall have double the money which you had last time."

"Ah, noble lady," replied the peasant, very much frightened, "I dare not venture again in Number Nip's garden, for a terrible figure



"What dost thou do here?" growled he. [face p. 96



appeared to me there, and has threatened me with death if I go again."

"But consider what a reward you will have. The mountain Spirit only wanted to frighten you, so that no one should go and disturb him in his dreary abode. Besides, who has ever heard of Number Nip doing a wilful injury to any one?"

In this manner the lady sought to reason the peasant out of his fear, and at last he could not withstand her coaxing words, and her still more enticing promises, and for the second time, he ventured to trespass upon the mountain spirit's territories.

He dug in great fear and haste, but scarcely had he put the spade twice in the ground, when he heard the same terrible sound, only more awful than before, and when, pale with fright, he looked towards the rock, there stood the figure in a most threatening attitude, and its eyes appeared to vomit forth flames of fire.

"What dost thou do there?" growled he; and his voice sounded like an earthquake.

"I am seeking for the spring-root for a sick lady who will pay me well for it," the peasant ventured to reply. At this a fearful glance darted from the spirit's eyes.

"I have warned thee, and thou still venturest to hasten to thy destruction. Fool! that which thou hast thou mayest retain. Now, deliver thyself if thou canst."

At these words the dreadful club went whizzing through the air after the trembling man, but he sprang on one side just at the right time, and the club struck into the ground. The earth trembled at the mighty blow; long-echoing thunder overpowered the peasant, and he sank senseless to the ground.

After a while he recovered from his swoon; but all his bones seemed trembling and broken. Fortunately he still held the plant in his hand, and keeping a fast hold of that, he crept in great pain along the ground. The rain and thick fog wetted him through, and he lost his way; now he was at the edge of some dangerous precipice, and now close by some rushing stream which stopped his progress.

Two long days and nights he wandered, halffainting, through the mountains, without being able to find his way, until at last a charcoal burner met the poor man, and carried him half dead into his hut. The peasant, after many days, was able to carry the hardly won roots to Liegnitz, where the rich reward at last made him forget his terrible fright.

A long time passed, during which the sick lady quickly regained her health, and she felt scarcely any bad effects from her illness.

"If I had only one more fresh root, I feel as though I should be well for ever," said she, and then she sent once more for the peasant, who at first would not come. But lust for gold is a bad spirit, who leads us astray against our will; so it was with the peasant, and at last he went to Liegnitz, and said,

"Here I am, noble lady. What do you wish of me? I will do anything for you, except again go into Number Nip's garden. God keep me from that! Did you know how badly I was served last time, and how nearly I lost my life? Do not remind me of that dreadful affair."

"Oh," answered the lady, "I conjure you, for the last time, to fetch me the healing plant. I am rich enough to recompense you for every fear and danger; and will give you fine fruitful possessions, if you will once more tread that dangerous path for me."

The promised riches so blinded the peasant, that he forgot all danger, and promised the lady that he would fetch the herb, even though it should cost him his life.

"Until now," said he, "the Spirit has only threatened me, and for so much wealth surely I could brave a fight. But after this, no power on earth shall persuade me to go again into the mountains. I shall be a rich man then, and live rich and happy."

But this third time he did not venture to go alone; he took his eldest son with him, and told him he was going to the Spirit's garden. The boy was delighted, and they began to ascend, until at last the mountain became steeper, and more barren. Far below in the valley the snow glistened, clear and white, like a shroud, although it was the height of summer. Sad thoughts arose in the peasant's mind; he knew not how it was, but suddenly he heard a voice murmuring in his ear,

"Wicked spirits have had power over thee since thy youth, so that thou hast never striven after eternal good, but only for earthly happiness. Thou hast lived an unprofitable life, just as though, when death came, thy being would be over. Riches and the lust of the world were thy idols, and they will lead thee to destruction."

But the peasant tried to still the warning voice, by thinking of the happy life which he would lead when he should get his reward. So he quickly seized the spade, and began to dig. Then there arose a great wind, the trees in the valley below bent under its violence, and the clouds poured down, so that in a moment the smallest brooks swelled into wild torrents, the earth groaned, and a terrible cleft suddenly appeared in the rock, whence issued a gigantic figure, which approached and seized the senseless peasant, and then disappeared with him into the horrible abyss. Weaker and more distant might be heard the cries of the unfortunate man. At last the dark overhanging clouds disappeared, the storm had blown down the fir-trees, and the forsaken, shelterless boy, in great sorrow and terror, sought the neighbouring chapel, to throw himself under the protection of God.

At the same hour the lady in Liegnitz died suddenly!

LITTLE PETERKIN.

his father took a relation into his house, and the boy was placed under her charge. She made him go out the whole day into the forest to chop and fell wood, and she was cross and unkind. She could not bear Peterkin, because he was always gay and happy, and played about as if the whole world belonged to him. On this account, she complained to his father of him, and when the poor man came home, tired from his hard daily work, she grumbled so much to him about his son's disobedience, that without more ado, he seized a stick and flogged the poor little boy most unmercifully.

Remonstrance would only have still more enraged the angry man; so Peterkin submitted to his father without a murmur, and became quite accustomed to be scolded by his aunt, and beaten every evening, without any reason, by his father.

As he had no pleasure in his home, his greatest delight was to be out in the fields; there he did not see his aunt's malicious face, and there no one scolded or beat him. winter came at last, and put a stop to his liberty. Out of doors, the fields, and on the high mountains, all was hidden under snow, and Peterkin was nearly frozen in his little thin linen jacket. And now his only pleasure was to go outside the cottage, and crumble up as much bread as he could spare from his own breakfast, for the sparrows. When the birds flapped their wings and hopped around him, his heart beat for joy, and often he gave them all his black bread, quite forgetting that he himself would have to go without. One day his aunt expected a guest, and so had bought a fish for dinner. Peterkin by chance, came by the tub, in which the woman had put it for a little while, so that it should not die before she wanted to kill it.

"Poor little animal," said Peterkin, "wouldst thou not much rather be in the great pond than in this spoonful of water? Thou hast not room to move about. Come, I will give thee a little more freedom."

So saying, he carried the writhing fish out to the brook which flowed by the house, and when the fish made great waves by lashing his tail about, and then swam away over the white pebbles, Peterkin danced about for joy.

But his aunt guessed directly that her nephew had carried away the fish, and she said he did it out of malice; so when evening came, there was something else to complain of to his father, and that night, the father beat his tiresome boy most unmercifully.

But Peterkin thought to himself, "Without beating and hardships no one can grow big;" and so he shook himself and forgot it.

It vexed his aunt the more, because the boy never cried or complained; and she thought of all sorts of ways to do him harm. One day she sent him out into the fields, and said,

"You must not dare to come home again before you have filled this sack with ears of corn, for we have no more bread in the house."

This intelligence very much distressed Peterkin, but only on account of his father, who had



"You must not dare to come home again before you have filled this sack."

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been ill for a long time, and not able to earn anything; besides which he did not spend an over happy life with the scolding aunt.

Contrary to his usual mood, he set out very sorrowfully to the fields, and for a long time he sought so carefully for the grains, that his back ached. Mid-day passed, and he had scarcely filled the bottom of the sack; for only very poor people lived in the village, and they cleared out their fields as cleanly as possible, and left very few straws lying. "And then," thought Peterkin, "the dear little birds must also have some of it," so that here and there he left a grain.

At last the sun went down, and he had not half done his task. The tears filled his eyes when he thought of his poor sick father.

Suddenly, an aged-looking man, dressed like a hunter, stood before him, and asked him why he wept. Then Peterkin frankly told him all his troubles; nor did he forget to mention his wicked unkind aunt.

"Would you like something bad to happen to the woman who treats you so unkindly?" asked the stranger.

"Something bad?-oh, no; but I should

like my aunt to dance and laugh for a whole day, so that she might know what it is for people to be happy, and then perhaps, she would not be so cross and sullen."

The hunter could not help laughing at the boy's notion. Presently he clapped his hands very loudly, and all at once there came flying a whole cloud of birds, who alighted upon the corn-field; there they began to pick up the straws with their beaks, carrying them all to one place, and making a great heap of them. The hunter pointed to it, and said to Peterkin.

"Now fill the sack with them."

Peterkin, full of amazement, did so, and lo! soon he had filled his basket, and his task was done. The hunter was no longer to be seen or heard, but the little birds remained with him, and flew by his side all the way to his father's cottage, and they sang so beautifully that his heart beat for joy at the sound.

But his aunt made an ugly grimace, for she fancied that Peterkin could never find so many grains as she had commanded him to collect; and she thought he would never return without them for fear of punishment, but that

he would wander forth into the wide world.

But Peterkin was very happy now that his father could have a good supper; for the miller's wife had given him soup and bread in exchange for the corn which he had collected, and, although he had nothing but two cold roasted potatoes for his own supper, he did not complain.

The next day his aunt said to him,

"Go and fetch a fine fish out of the pond, so that I may cook it. But do not come back empty-handed, for if you do, I cannot give anything to your father to eat, and he is beginning to have a good appetite again."

Peterkin went very sadly to the brook with his little net, and he thought,

"If my father were only well again, so that my aunt did not reproach him for every morsel of bread he eats, I should be so happy; and I would willingly bear my floggings every evening. Oh, if he were but strong enough to let me feel the strength of his arm!"

Thus thinking to himself, he sank his net into the water, but hour after hour passed, and he had caught nothing; then he sat down amongst the rushes, and cried bitterly.

He had not remained so long, when he saw the old hunter again approaching him, and he asked him why he wept. Peterkin related how unkind his aunt was to his father, and that she would let him starve if he did not return home with a fish.

The hunter again clapped his hands, but very softly; then he told the boy to dip his little net once more into the stream. Immediately a great fish rose, driving a quantity of smaller pikes and barbels before it, right into the net, so that it became filled in no time, and Peterkin was even obliged to empty some out.

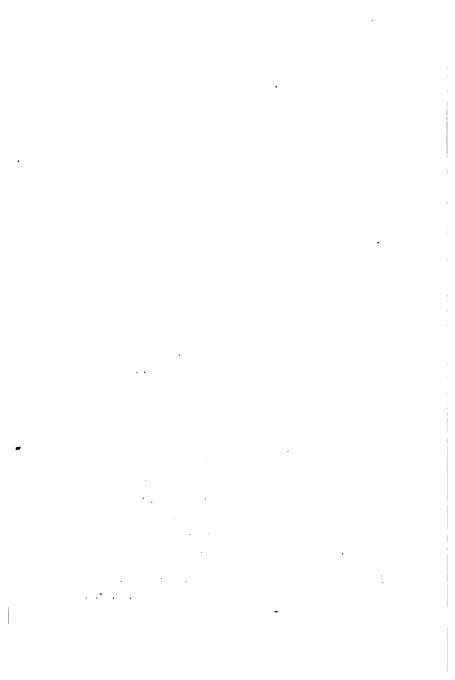
"Do you not know that fish?" said the hunter. "It is the same which you took out of the tub, and carried back to the little brook near your cottage."

Peterkin was still more surprised at this, and he watched the fish, who slowly swam away, till he was lost to sight. In the meantime his kind friend, the hunter, had again disappeared; and Peterkin ran joyfully home; for out of what he had caught, his father would have enough to last for many days.



Told the boy to dip his little net once more into the stream.

[face p. 108.



As the wicked woman found she could not do any harm in this manner to the good little fellow, her hatred towards him increased, and she resolved to rid herself of him for ever. She told him that on the following morning he must climb the mountains and call for Number Nip; and when he appeared, Peterkin was to ask him for a little man made of a root; for she said if his father had that, he would be well in no time. He was not to dare to return without it, but was to go on calling Number Nip until he should appear, and give him what he asked for.

In her wicked heart she thought the mountain Spirit would kill Peterkin, if he called him by his nickname, and therefore, by this means, she should never again see the object of her dislike. Besides this, she thought the sick man had not long to live; and when both were gone, the cottage and all that was in it would belong to her.

The boy indeed, had heard countless horrible tales about the Spirit; but he thought, "All the people in the village call me brother Happy-heart; and my darling mother, who is now in Heaven, used also to tell me many funny stories of Number Nip; and by them I have

learned that even the Spirit himself will do no harm to an innocent and joyful heart; and that he is not nearly so bad as he is represented."

With this thought he set out, cut himself a stick, and began climbing the mountains.

"Hey, hey!" he heard a voice all at once calling behind him; "are you going out wandering into the wide world, Peterkin?"

He turned round, and saw the hunter sauntering forward from under the trees.

"Listen," said the merry little boy. "Now I have to go to Number Nip, and ask him for a little man made out of a root. My aunt says that that will make my father well; do you know whether it is true?"

"I cannot tell; but are you not afraid to appear before the wild mountain Spirit?"

"Oh, he will surely allow people to speak to him—curious old gentleman! And besides, I am sure he is not so bad as people make him out. What harm can he do to me; a few blows and boxes on the ear will not be much, for I am quite used to them from my father, when he is well enough."

"I do not think Mr. John (for so the spirit was sometimes called) would do you much harm,

you silly boy," said the strange hunter. "Yet who knows whether you will be able to meet with him? We hunters have, however, lived so long in the wood, that we know all nature's secrets, and so I can myself fulfil your wish. Here is a little root man for you. Your father must wear him round his neck, fastened by a string, and it will cure him. So now go home, Little merry-heart."

Peterkin had no time to thank the good old man, who was rapidly striding away over the fields, and at the same time appeared to be going higher and higher, until his head reached a cloud, into which his whole form disappeared. This was unaccountable to our little friend; and he ran as fast as he could to the village, with the little root manikin in his hand, at which he had scarcely time to look. His aunt met him at the door, looking thunder-clouds.

"Weeds will not wither," muttered she between her teeth, as she welcomed Peterkin with a heavy blow. He opened his hand to show her the root man; but lo! she had scarcely looked at it, when she burst out into a screaming laugh, and ran about as if pursued or stung by a tarantula.

Peterkin stared in astonishment, first at his aunt, and then at the old hunter's gift, and could not tell what had come to the woman. The root did, indeed, look very comical, for it exactly resembled a little deformed man, with long spindle shanks, and arms to match; his head and body were very thick in proportion to his limbs, and his face was a malicious grinning caricature. A pigtail, longer than the whole wee figure, completed the wonderful appearance of the little root-man. Yet still Peterkin could not understand why his aunt should never cease laughing. He approached her, to try and show her more closely the object of her laughter, but at this she was quite beside herself; the tears started from her eyes, and she fell breathless on the sick man's bed, where she continued to laugh still more loudly and violently.

All at once it occurred to Peter what he had once told the wonderful hunter, that he wished his aunt might spring and jump about a whole day; and when he remembered that, he no longer doubted that it was Number Nip who had appeared to him in the guise of a hunter, and had fulfilled his wish.

His next thought was that the root would

certainly cure his father; for the mountain Spirit always kept his word, and so he tied the little man round the invalid's neck. In so doing, he again had to come near his aunt, who lay half dead at his father's feet. She sprang up as though she were mad, and then rolled on the floor, and when she reached the open door of the room, she rushed out into the village, and far off in the distance, they could still hear her shrieking laughter.

From that hour the patient recovered; and when Peterkin related all that had happened, and in what manner he had met with Number Nip, his father opened his eyes wide at the wrong which the wicked aunt had done to little Peterkin, and he resolved that she should never enter the house again. She stayed away, however, of her own accord, for she had almost met her death in her merry dance which Peterkin had caused, and no power in the world could again bring her near the little boy, whom she believed had enchanted her.

She went right away; many many miles from the village, and Peterkin lived happy as a king now, for his father grew quite strong and well. And one day as he was digging at the root of a tree, he found some old gold coins with which he bought a piece of ground, and a cow. Yes, he was so successful in all he did that he soon became the most prosperous farmer in the mountains; and Peterkin was able in the winter to scatter a great many grains of food for the dear little birds, and also in the severe winter, to carry food into the forest for the stags and deer.

The wicked aunt died of envy and malevolence; but Peterkin lived long and happily, and often related, with great glee, his adventure with the wonderful hunter.

THE WHEEL.

ITH a great deal of trouble a coachman once rolled a wheel across the mountains.

At last he reached a steep height, and trundling the wheel against a tree, he laid himself down under its cool shade, and being very much tired, fell asleep. By the time he awoke, Number Nip had assumed the form of the wheel, and when the coachman tried to roll it farther, he could not move it, in spite of all his exertions.

At last he succeeded in pushing it from the tree to which it had hitherto stuck as if nailed, but just then it fell to the ground a hundred times heavier.

Suddenly, while the exhausted man was cursing the wheel, which he had given up all hopes of being able to move, it stood upright of itself; and when he touched it, it rolled away with astonishing speed over stones and roots of trees, and then right down the mountain.

Panting with fatigue, the coachman was obliged to run after it, noticing in amazement how it rolled up the mountains, and down the mountains, all with the same swiftness. When he was far away from it, it seemed to move slower, so that he thought he could soon reach it; but when he was near to it, it rolled on faster than ever.

So the wheel ran, with the coachman behind it, over mountain and valley, until at last he succeeded in catching it. Now he held it with all his strength, but the wheel fell to the ground, and carried the coachman down with it.

Suddenly it rose and flew through the air like an arrow, until at last it laid itself down, with the exhausted coachman, before his master's house.

GREENMANTLE.

Giant Mountains there stood a little hut, in which lived a poor charcoal burner, named Erdmann, with his son Conrad. Conrad was a fine, intelligent, good-hearted boy, whose greatest pleasure, when he got a few hours of liberty (for he was generally obliged to work hard with his father, although he was only eleven years old), was to climb the mountain which was most avoided by the few people round, because they believed Number Nip lived there.

Here then, he played with his school-fellows, and their favourite game was to throw stones, or small bits of tin, at a particular mark.

Very often the boys when they played this game, found little silver coins in the sand, the value of which however, none of them knew;

and this being the case, they never troubled themselves to pick them up. But if by chance, one or other of them happened to find a small piece of money, whose value was known to them, there was great rejoicing; but the children were still at that happy age when avarice was a stranger to their souls, and they would think no more of the affair, until at last an old man used to join the boys at their play, whom, on account of the mantle which he wore, they called "Greenmantle."

Greenmantle seemed to be very fond of children; he directed their games, and sometimes taught them new ones. He it was who always found the most silver pennies, which he would divide amongst the boys, so that they all loved him dearly, and would like to have known very much whence he came, and whither he went, for each time he disappeared they were unable to trace him; and in like manner he would appear quite suddenly in their midst. But as he never answered their questions upon this subject, it was in time quite forgotten by the little boys.

Before long, their unknown playfellow began to command and be judge over them. If any little quarrels arose, whichever was wrong might make sure of receiving some hard blows from Greenmantle. Sometimes he would send all away excepting Conrad, whom he appeared to like more than the rest. He would take the lad by the hand and lead him through cliffs and rocks, until they came to terribly steep places; there he showed him gold coins in the sand, with which Conrad played; but whenever he had done playing, he lost them, and could find them nowhere.

At last the wonders which Greenmantle performed, frightened the little boys from their play-place, and Conrad was the only one who still went there.

Still he was not at all lonely, for Greenmantle seldom failed to come; and besides this he began to talk to him, a thing which he had never done before. He told him all kinds of pretty stories, and often gave his little friend pieces of gold; but he made him promise to preserve the deepest silence about his adventures.

Conrad thought there could be nothing wrong in that; and promised Greenmantle that he would tell no one that he met him, and her home. He said he had found her in the wood."

Conrad was not a little astonished at this; and he related his adventures with the strange old man. On the food that was bought, and the gold that remained over, the father and son were able to live for more than a week; and they thanked God that He had raised up for them such wonderful help.

But the food which Conrad had bought seemed to increase the sick man's fever, so that his death was nigh at hand. Some of his acquaintances came from the village to be near him in his last moments. Amongst them was the man who had given Conrad the gold piece. He said to the weeping boy,

"Go out into the fresh air; thy father will soon be well again, and, if not, I will be thy father."

Sadly and sorrowfully Conrad went out, and directed his steps towards the well-known mountain, where he had so often met his dear Greenmantle.

In some places the snow still lay upon the mountain, while below in the valley, spring was

in its prime. But the miserable boy had no eye now for all the beauties of nature; he laid himself down in the soft moss, and wept, quietly but very bitterly. Just below him the brook was flowing fast, and the trees were green with the bursting of the leaves and buds.

"Why dost thou weep so?" said a well-known voice behind him; and Conrad joyfully raised his swollen eyes to behold the form of his friend.

"Get up," said he, "and tell me your trouble; perhaps I can help you."

"Ah;" replied the boy, sighing; "everything here is so lovely; and down below there, in our cottage, all is so sad. My dear father is dying; and I shall be alone and desolate in the world."

"Look a moment at this wild rose bush," said Greenmantle, "how spring has made it fresh and green again, so that the first buds are already showing themselves; and think how withered and naked it was in the autumn, so that you might fancy it could never bloom again. Gather the fresh leaves from this branch, and strew thy father's sick bed with them; perhaps it will revive his sinking and dying strength; but make haste. The time is short."

Conrad scarcely stayed to thank Greenmantle; he filled his cap with the rose leaves, and also carried as many as he could in his hands. He ran swiftly down the mountain, and to the cottage, and strewed the sick man's bed with the fresh leaves so sweet and green. When he had done so, his father opened his eyes, and gently pressed the boy's hand, as a sign of the pleasure he felt in the strengthening perfume. And then there came a visible change over him, which astonished them all.

On the third day, by leaning on Conrad on the one side, and on a neighbour on the other, he was able to go outside his hut, and sit at the door in the mild sunshine.

- "How has such a wonderful thing happened to me who thought to die so soon?" said he, joyfully.
- "Perhaps," said the boy, artlessly, "the fresh rose leaves which I strewed on your bed, have helped to restore you?"
 - "How have you become so clever in the physician's art as to know this, my son?"

Conrad was at a loss what to answer; he thought of the promise which he had made to Greenmantle never to reveal his secret; but yet to tell a lie—God be thanked! he had never yet done that.

"He obtained the rose leaves from where he got his goat back again," said the neighbour, in a mocking tone.

"I am sure I don't know the man to whom I sold the goat; I have neither seen him before nor since," said Conrad.

"But you must know him," continued the neighbour, maliciously; "surely it was he who gave you the fine present of gold pieces, which you have hidden in your chamber so secretly."

"How, my child!—you have had gold in your possession, and yet have allowed your father to remain so long in want and suffering?" asked Erdmann, reproachfully.

"Father, they are only to play with," whispered Conrad, timidly; "but I will tell you all."

And now the boy frankly told him all, though he did it much against his will, because his friend Greenmantle had forbidden him to do so.

"It is none other than the lord of the Giant Mountains, the much feared Number Nip," said Erdmann, joyfully. "He has put an end to our misery for ever. But now we will leave this

barren village, and hasten to a more fertile place."

So they fetched the pieces of gold from the hut, packed up their little property and went into another part of Silesia, where Erdmann bought a pretty little cottage, and reared up his son to be a brave industrious man. And in the prosperous latter years of his life Conrad often thought, with a grateful heart, of his dear mountain friend, Greenmantle.

THE OLD SHEPHERD.

FTER all the tales you have read about him, you can see that it was Number Nip's maxim to punish the wicked, and bestow help and happiness only on good men. He sought mostly for very bad or very good characters; but he was not always able to atone, when he had played harmful tricks. Sometimes, quite without reason, he would assume the forms of all kinds of strange and horrible animals, in order to frighten women on their way to market. Sometimes he would lame the feet of traveller's horses, break a wheel, or throw a piece of rock in the way, over which they could not get without a good deal of trouble. When they were provoked to anger by these vicious tricks, he punished them by throwing showers of stones after them, till they had passed the boundaries of his kingdom; or perhaps he sent a swarm of bees, as thick as a cloud, which so terrified the poor wayfarer, that he left the mountain half dead. He talked with but very few people; and they had to be careful not to put too much trust in him.

There is a story told of an old shepherd's adventure with the spirit, which well illustrates his selfishness and cruelty. The mountain Spirit often spoke to this man—yes, he had even formed a sort of friendship with him, and the shepherd had related to him the story of his simple life.

To thank him for his tale, Number Nip allowed him to lead his flock to the very hedge surrounding his garden, which was a thing no one else dared to do. But being too sure of the capricious Spirit's favour, the man once drove his sheep so near the hedge, that one of them, tempted by the delicious odour of the turnips, grazed, mightily contented, on the forbidden ground.

At this Number Nip was so enraged, that he frightened the animals by a terrible noise, and they ran pell-mell down the mountain, and most of the poor animals were either lost altogether, or greatly injured. Thus the poor old shepherd's sole property was destroyed, and he himself made so miserable, that he died.



They ran pell-mell down the mountain. [face p. 128.



NUMBER NIP PUNISHES AN IGNORAMUS.

NE day Number Nip was lying in the warm sunshine. He had taken the form of a woodcutter, so that he could have a passing joke with travellers; for his time lay heavy on his hands, for all the world as it does with mortals who have nothing to do. Presently a physician from Schmiedeberg came past, to seek for flowers upon the mountain. Number Nip was by his side in a moment, offering to carry the bundle of plants which the weary mountaineer had collected.

He soon discovered that the physician was a swaggering quack doctor. This man told him of the wonderful cures he had effected, and of his matchless skill. But what most delighted the Spirit, was to hear how many mistakes the honourable doctor made, and the pretended

woodcutter corrected him, and told him many other secrets of herbs which he was ignorant of. This confused so much the thick-headed quack, that presently he said, in a contemptuous tone, "Shoemaker, stick to thy last."

Number Nip was still more amused at the doctor's anger; and only continued very quietly to tell him more secrets, so that he completely stopped the poor man's boastful quack stories.

"If you are so wonderfully knowing about plants and herbs, from the cedar, which grows on Lebanon, even to the hyssop," said the quack, "perhaps, all-wise woodcutter, you can tell me which was first in the world, the acorn or the tree?"

The Spirit replied, laughing,

- "Why, certainly the acorn tree, the oak; for the acorn has to grow upon the tree."
- "Now see what a simpleton you are!" said the physician, mockingly. "How could the first tree have come then? because the tree grows from the seed contained in the acorn."

Then the woodcutter replied,

"You have asked me a very difficult question; such depth of knowledge is too much for me. All that I know, my mother has taught me. But perhaps you could give me some advice. I have a bad fever, and have used all kinds of medicines in vain for it. Only see how I shiver with fever."

Then the Spirit pretended to shiver and shake, and knocked his knees together, and held his breath, by which means he became quite blue in the face. The quack said:

"Ah, my friend, you are very ill; it is a fortunate thing that you have met with me. I am the right man. I will cure you in the twinkling of an eye."

He opened his medicine case, from which he took several different drugs; then he threw in some liquids, and mixed all up together. The mountain Spirit shuddered when he thought that he should have to swallow this vile, disgusting stuff. Then the quack doctor took a large bottle filled with pills, for which he had no special name; only calling them a universal cure for gout, headache, sore throat, and all kinds of fevers. He told the woodcutter that he must take a dozen of them every hour; and a spoonful of the medicine; and if he did so, he would be quite well in

three days, and for all this, he was only to give him a florin.

"You are certainly a most wise and clever gentleman," said the woodcutter, "and I will do as you advise, but you must do me the favour of answering me one question which I will put to you. To whom does the ground on which we are standing belong—to the King of Bohemia, or to the lord of the Giant Mountains?" (Thus he always called himself, for of course the nickname of Number Nip was disagreeable to him, and, when he heard it, made him very angry.)

The quack did not consider long. "Why, to whom but the King of Bohemia, for Number Nip is only a creation of the brain made to terrify children."

But scarcely were these words out of his mouth, when the woodcutter was changed into a gigantic, terrible figure, who glared at the poor doctor with eyes like flames of fire.

"I will show you," thundered he, "that the lord of the Mountains is no creation of the brain to frighten children; you yourself shall prove it. You ignorant quack, you shall remember me in such a manner, that you will

never again question my real existence. You shall yourself swallow your beautiful, wonderful pills, and the hellish mixture too, with which you wanted to cure my supposed fever. You shall not stir from this place, until you have swallowed every drop of your poison. The sick people in the village will thank me for this. Now, my friend, swallow it—quick!"

The quack begged and implored in vain. At last, exhibiting every emotion of terror, he seized the glass, and took a mighty gulp. Bitter tears started from his eyes, and sweat stood upon his forehead; but the terrible spirit stood beside him, with raised arm, threatening to throw him to the ground if he demurred. When, after a dreadful struggle, the medicine was down, either for good or for evil, it came to the pills' turn, at which the quack made more dismal grimaces than at the medicine.

"It will be my death," groaned he. "I shall die of the horrible things."

But the Spirit jokingly reminded him how wonderfully healing these pills were, of what cures he had already wrought with them, and told him that he should have more faith in his own profession. Thirty pills had the poor man already disposed of; then he threw himself despairingly on the ground, and said,

"Rather kill me, thou terrible spirit. There can be no more bitter death, than to die by these poisonous pills."

"Then mind and remember that," said Number Nip, and gave the doctor, who lay upon the ground, a kick, which made him roll right down the mountain, bruised with the stones, and wounded against the roots of trees. Happily he at last reached firm ground, but so bruised and knocked about was he, that for many weeks he was not able to leave his bed. He became so suspicious, that he always feared Number Nip was behind him when he was called to a patient, and he took mighty good care never to use his old cures again.

"Who knows," say the people, "but what that was the physician who has now become so celebrated as the inventor of the homoeopathic cure?"



And gave the Doctor a kick.

[face p. 134.



THE JOURNEY TO KARLSBAD.

RICH countess, who used to spend the winter in Breslau, and the summer in some pleasant watering place, made up her mind, on one occasion, to pass it at Karlsbad, because she needed the baths there, and her daughters the company. They always travelled in such haste, that they rested neither day nor night, because they wanted to enjoy all the balls, promenades, music, and serenades.

To Karlsbad then, they were travelling; and at sunset they arrived at the Giant Mountains. As it was a beautiful warm summer's evening, and not a breath of wind stirring, they resolved to travel all the sweet starlight and moonlight night. The carriage was so conveniently made, and moved so smoothly along the mountains, that mother and daughters and lady's maid all slept very cosily.

John alone, who sat behind the postillion on the coach-box, could not sleep by reason of his dangerous position; and even had that not prevented him, he could not have done so from terror, for all the wonderful stories of Number Nip, the spirit of the mountains, would come into his thoughts; and he deeply bemoaned the bold resolution of his mistress to cross the fearful mountain Spirit's dominions at dead of night.

How much rather would he have been at home in Breslau, where he had nothing to fear from such mighty and powerful ghosts. He kept casting his eyes around him; and when they fell on any object, such as a tree or a shrub, he trembled like a leaf in the wind. He asked the postillion more than once whether there was anything to be afraid of in this part of the mountain, but still he could not quiet himself, even when assured that there was indeed nothing to fear.

But his apprehensions were soon turned into real terror, when the postillion suddenly pulled up the horses, muttering a curse between his teeth. About ten steps from them, stood a supernaturally tall figure, with a long white neck, but without a head. This frightful ap-



About ten steps from them stood a supernaturally tall figure without a head. [face p. 136.

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parition stood still for a moment when the coachman stopped his horses; but immediately he smacked his whip, it rushed forward.

"Friend, what is that?" shrieked John, in the greatest terror.

"Be quiet," said the postillion, in a low voice, "or we shall irritate the Spirit."

But the affrighted servant could no longer sit on the box, where he thought he was most open to danger, so he got down and knocked violently at the carriage window. "If," thought he, "the countess had the foolish wish to travel here by night, of course she must know how to get out of this danger."

The ladies, rousing themselves very unwillingly from their sweet slumbers, asked what was the matter.

"Oh, your graces, there goes a thing without a head!" stammered the man, and his teeth chattered.

"And why do you wake me for that, you simpleton? as though one could not see that any day in and out of Breslau." And she laughed at her own wit, but the two young ladies could not join in it; for they immediately remembered the horrible tales

about Number Nip, and they cried with one voice,

"That must be the mountain Spirit, mamma. Remember, we are right in the heart of the Giant Mountains."

But spirits did not seem to trouble the countess; for she smiled at her daughters' terror, and jested about the ghost stories, which she called the imaginations of an overheated brain. She was suddenly interrupted however in the middle of her speech, for the blackmantled figure, who had for a moment disappeared, approached, and was again visible in the clear moonlight.

A scream of terror was heard in the carriage, and the silken curtains were hastily drawn before the windows. But the dreadful unknown did not molest the ladies; he merely contented himself with knocking the servant from the coach-box, and crying to the stunned postillion, between some sharp boxes on the ear, "Take that for driving so near my hedges. The beasts and traps belong to me, now." So saying, the headless monster climbed on to the saddle, whipped the horses, and flew so rapidly over brake and briar, that the fearful cries of

the women could not be heard for the rattling of the wheels.

All at once the number of this nocturnal travelling company was increased; for a rider was now seen galloping by the driver, who never seemed to remark that his companion had no head; and this figure kept riding close by the carriage, as though it belonged to him.

This new companion did not seem pleasing to the black mantle; he turned the horses' heads in another direction—first to the left and then to the right; yet he could not rid himself of his mysterious comrade. He became still more terrified, when he discovered that the stranger's horse had only three legs; and that yet the creature galloped along at intense speed.

"Ah, that must be the real Number Nip," sighed he in a fright. "My part will soon be played out now he has joined us."

Suddenly the rider galloped his three-legged horse close up to the figure, and asked him familiarly,

"Friend without a head, which way are you going?"

"Always to follow my nose," said he, with a sorry attempt to be bold.

Immediately the horseman seized the bridle, and cried out,

"Hold! Comrade!" And taking him by the neck he threw him so violently to the ground, that all his bones cracked. The headless monster had, as will now be seen, flesh and bone like any other man, and groaned terribly when the horseman tore off his mask. He perceived beyond all doubt that he was in the hands of the powerful mountain Spirit, whom he had himself pretended to be, and he knew he should be compelled to give himself up either to his mercy or displeasure, even as Number Nip pleased.

It was a good thing that he was humble; for the Spirit was so enraged, that he would certainly have killed him, had he ventured to speak a word.

"Sit up," commanded the Spirit, "and do what I tell you."

Then, in a moment, putting on his horse's fourth leg, and fastening it to the ribs, he approached the carriage door, to do the polite to the ladies. But they lay quite stunned and

senseless on the cushions, and gave no signs of life.

The horseman fetched some clear water from the neighbouring brook, and sprinkled it over their faces. This brought them back to consciousness. It calmed them very much to see such a nice-looking man near them, who would protect them; and they felt free from all anxiety when he said:

"I am extremely sorry for you, ladies. You have been frightened by a masked villain, who, no doubt, intended to rob you; but you are perfectly safe now. I am the overseer of the Mountain Valley; will you permit me to conduct you to my house, which is not far off?"

The ladies joyfully accepted the friendly invitation. Meantime, the overseer rode up to the bewildered postillion, and ordered him to drive first to the left, and afterwards to the right; he also caught two or three bats, to whom he seemed to speak a few words, and then let them fly.

The journey may have continued in this way for about an hour, when they saw a gleam of light in the distance, and then four horsemen with torches came to seek their master. The countess was much pleased at this, and begged the Herr Von Riesenthal to send some of his people to seek for their poor servant John, who had been left behind. This he immediately did. Soon the carriage drove over a drawbridge, through an ancient gateway, and then stopped before a brilliantly lighted castle. The horseman descended from his steed, and, offering his arm to the countess, he led all three ladies into a splendid saloon, where a large company was assembled.

The young ladies were inconsolable at having to go in their crumpled travelling dress into such a glittering circle. The master of the house, remarking their embarrassment, caused them to be led into a room where there was everything necessary for the toilet. Six long candles burned before a large mirror, beautiful soap, perfumed waters, oils, and essences for the hair, and all such articles lay upon a costly washing-stand, and on the table were the finest Parisian gloves and shoes.

The young ladies had never met with a more agreeable adventure. The attentive host procured a physician for them, who examined into the state of their health, after such a great fright; and

with an important face, felt the countess's pulse. After long deliberation, he said, with a shake of the head, that he should dread the worst consequences from such an unusual agitation, if the ladies did not consent to be bled.

The countess felt her life at stake, and so she soon submitted; but the young ladies did not like it, and it required their mother to command them before they would consent.

The physician took no notice of their unwillingness; and rendered them quite incapable of going to a ball for a week to come.

The operation performed, they returned to the saloon, where a princely repast was spread. The table almost broke beneath its load of silver; the most costly meats, the rarest wines, and fruits, though they belonged to quite other times of the year, were all there. When the beautiful dessert was placed on the table, the countess and her daughters were greatly astonished to see the whole of their adventure represented in sugar.

Wondering at the short time which this ornament had taken to make, and the minuteness of the workmanship, the countess asked

her neighbour, who was a Bohemian count, what grand gala day was being celebrated, and received for answer, that the guests had merely met by accident; and that it was only a little friendly meal, such as their entertainer was accustomed to have every day.

This information increased the ladies' pleasure at finding themselves in such good company, and the countess was only astonished that she had never before seen or heard of this rich and hospitable man. She thought over all the noble German families; yet, think as she would, no great family of Riesenthal could she remember. Her train of thought was interrupted by every one beginning to relate stories of Number Nip; and the countess took the opportunity of expressing her doubts concerning the real existence of the mountain Spirit, interspersing what she said with many witty remarks.

"My own adventure is the best proof of what all these fables are," said she, "and that the mountain Spirit only dwells in the imagination of terrified idiots. If he had truly dwelt here in the mountains, would he have calmly permitted this villain to do such mischief in his name? It would be a taint on the poor Spirit's honour; for without the brave help of Herr Von Riesenthal, the insolent man would have robbed and perhaps murdered us."

The host mildly said that he did not think the mountain Spirit was a nonentity. But he was interrupted by the entrance of John, who began to be quite courageous again, when he found himself in such safe company.

He had brought with him, in great triumph, the head of black mantle, who had carried that article under his arm during his mummery, and by some accident lost it. To the great amusement of the guests, it was found to be only a scooped-out pumpkin, filled with sand and stones; outside was fixed a wooden nose and a long flaxen beard, and this made a most terrificlooking human countenance.

After passing the night in the softest of down beds, the ladies, on the following morning, left the hospitable castle, perfectly enchanted with their reception.

Herr Von Riesenthal, after he had in vain tried to make his guests remain another day, accompanied them to the bounds of his dominions, and the ladies were obliged to promise that they would pay him another visit on their return. When the Spirit (for of course he it was) re-entered his castle, the poor wretch who had played his part in such an unlucky manner was brought before him.

"Miserable creature," thundered the Spirit, "how did you dare to play such a trick within my realm? You shall repent of this your whole life long. Who are you, and what made you play the ghost in the mountain?"

"Great prince of the Giant Mountains, forgive," said the cunning fellow. "I knew not the law which forbade me to assume your form. And I can tell you that this same thing very often happens. Sometimes you are represented at masked balls, with a head cut out of a pumpkin; sometimes you are cut out of a cocoa nut shell, or moulded in plaster of Paris, and sold for a few pence. But now I know that you do not approve of it, it shall never happen again; only forgive me this time, powerful Spirit. I am by profession a purse-maker, but it is a miserable trade. How many purses have I made, whilst those remained quite empty; although the people said I was a lucky hand, for in the purses that I made, the money always stayed longer than in those turned out by others. But this is the

trick of it. I made purses of leather; and leathern purses are always better than netted silk ones. Why? Now see: leathern purses are generally bought by labourers and poor tradesmen, who, of course, are no spendthrifts; but rich people always have fine silk purses, and so it is no wonder that the money does not remain there long, for there is always some reason why much runs out, however much be put in it."

- "Well, what more?" said Number Nip, who could not conceal that he was amused at the man.
- "Now there came to be want and famine in the land; I was forced to give good merchandize for bad or little money, so I took to begging, and got thrown into prison. When I again had my liberty, no one would give me any work, and I wandered into the wide world. In my travels I met with an old fellow-workman, who appeared in very good condition, and rode upon a fine horse.
- "'Ah, ah, Franz!' laughed he. 'Not got any farther in the world? Come with me; I will teach you how to have your purse always full of gold.'
 - "This was just what I wanted, and I never

troubled myself whether it was an honourable trade he meant. Nor did he; he belonged to a gang which coined false money.

"I soon became as clever as they were in the art; but one day we were seized, and condemned to pass our lives in prison. There I lived a long, but not a pleasant time, until at last a recruiting officer came, and all the prisoners were made soldiers, for there was war in the country.

"I was pleased enough with the change; but I again met with misfortune. Once when I was out on a foraging expedition, I exceeded my orders, and not only cleared out granaries and barns but also trunks and chests. I was for this obliged to run the gauntlet, and was hunted out of the army, in which I could so easily have made my fortune.

"Now I could do nothing but return to my old trade; but as I could buy no leather, I picked a pocket of a leathern purse; in this I found some money, but that was not my fault. I could not, of course, put the money back without danger, and so I was compelled to keep it. This trade being profitable, I continued it. I often found old acquaintances amongst the

money, namely, our false coins, and people still cheat one another with them; but we had had our punishment for that. I collected tools and measures, and for a while made a very good business; but misfortunes never come singly, and it seemed as though I never was to get on. In Liegnitz I stole the purse of a rich grocer; it was well filled, but that was just the misfortune, for it was so heavy that it slipped even from my well-skilled hands; so I was seized and taken up as a pickpocket, but I said I was of a learned profession, and by deceit and certificates sought to get free. Yet the gentlemen of the court would not be persuaded.

"I was again imprisoned; but I watched my opportunity, and escaped. Soon I became hungry, and not liking that, I tried to beg again, but it would not do; the police in Great Glogau stopped me, and for two days I was obliged to do nothing. From that time I forsook towns, and enjoyed the country air, which suited me better. Then I met the countess who had her carriage broken; but when it was mended, they were to start for Karlsbad. The servant was terrified at the idea of crossing the Giant Mountains where the power-

ful Spirit dwelt by night. It occurred to me that I might take advantage of his cowardice, and play the part of a ghost. I borrowed the black cloak from the sexton; and a pumpkin, which stood on the top of his press, served me for a head, which I could take on and off at pleasure, and this, I thought, would frighten the travellers still more. Had the trick succeeded, I should have driven the ladies into the dark, deep forest, and compelled them to give me up their money and valuables; but I should have done them no greater harm.

of you, for the world is so enlightened now, that even children scarcely believe in you; and you will soon be quite forgotten. I thought you would like to be brought again to remembrance, and therefore do not be unmerciful to me. Only let me have food and a drink from your beer cask, you might make an honest and active servant of me; or give me, like that hungry young artizan, a handful of sloes from your garden. The poor creature did indeed bite two of his front teeth out in trying to eat your fruit, but you changed the sloes into real gold. Perhaps it would be agreeable to you to shoot me

with a brace of bullets, like the Prague student, when each ball was made of gold; or, if you would inflict a good punishment for my sin, do with me as with that shoemaker whom you belaboured with a golden measure, and then gave it him as a remembrance. The shoemaker still relates this story at——"

"Rascal!" said Number Nip. "I have patiently heard your tale to the end; but now run as fast as your legs can carry you. You will have your punishment without my giving it you."

The thief obeyed the Spirit's angry command with great pleasure; inwardly praising his own eloquence, which this time had got him scathless out of his disagreeable situation. He ran so fast to get out of Number Nip's way, that in his haste, he forgot the sexton's black mantle. But fast as he ran he did not seem to move from the place, for the same rocks and trees always surrounded him, and only Herr Von Riesenthal's castle had disappeared.

Quite exhausted with his fruitless endeavours to leave the place, he at last sank down under a tree, and fell fast asleep.

After some hours he awoke; and wondered to see intense darkness surrounding him, and

that he neither heard the sighing of the wind, nor saw a star in the heavens. He sprang up, and was not a little frightened when he heard the clanking of chains, which he found encumbered his own body. Several hours passed in fearful suspense, when at last he saw a gleam of light through the grating of a small window. Then all at once he discovered he was again in the prison from which he had escaped.

No one came to see after the prisoner, or to bring him food, though he was beginning to get very hungry; he therefore rattled his chains tremblingly against the strongly barred door.

It was long before the gaoler could summon courage to enter the cell which had been empty for many weeks. He thought there must be a hobgoblin there, and he opened the door with the greatest caution and fear, to find out the cause of the extraordinary noise. At first he shrank back from the figure which he saw moving about in the dark chamber; but when he perceived that it was his escaped prisoner, he was still more surprised, for he could not understand how he could be again in his old quarters. Did he come through the

door, or the grated window? Perhaps he voluntarily got there; for he might possess the power of coming in and going out, and of putting his chains on and off at pleasure.

As it remained incomprehensible how the sly thief had done the trick, the gaolers at last began to believe he had supernatural power. Gentlemen in Liegnitz would send for him to drag carts and carriages, to which he was fastened with chains, expecting to see him deliver himself when he wished; but it was remarked with astonishment that he never made use of his secret power to the end of his days.

In the meantime, the countess and her daughters had arrived safely at Karlsbad. She immediately sent for the bath physician to examine into her state of health. The same doctor entered, whose acquaintance she had made at Herr Von Riesenthal's castle, and who had bled them.

"Ah, welcome!" cried mother and daughters. "We supposed you still with Herr Von Riesenthal, and now here you are. Why did you not tell us that you were the doctor here?"

[&]quot;Yes, doctor!" cried the two beautiful girls.

"You have bled us even to the very veins in our feet; we are obliged to sit quiet, for we cannot dance a step."

The physician started. "Ladies," said he, "you mistake. I have never had the honour of seeing you before; neither do I leave this place during the season, and amongst all my acquaintance I do not know a Herr Von Riesenthal."

The countess laughed at this dissimulation, as she called it, and thought it was delicacy on the part of the doctor in not wishing to be paid for services which he had already rendered them. So she took a golden casket from her trunk, and presented it to the doctor. He received it as payment beforehand for the advice he should give the countess, and did not again contradict her, because he believed that sick people suffer from such fancies; and that her daughters agreed with her from respect to their mother.

Soon it was rumoured all over the place, that the countess was either mad or a sorceress; for the physican had told his patients, on his morning round, this little adventure of his, and all were curious to see the strange ladies.

The first time that the countess entered the

Kursaal with her daughters, a most wonderful sight met her gaze, for she saw exactly the same company to which she had been introduced by Herr Von Riesenthal.

She was pleased to meet with such an agreeable circle at once; and addressed them without further ceremony. But she felt repulsed by the cold reception which the ladies and gentlemen gave her; they who had recently shown her so much kindness and attention. At last she thought the whole must be a concerted joke; that Herr Von Riesenthal had a hand in it, and that by his sudden appearance amongst them, he would put an end to the trick.

She inquired daily for him, and related to many newly-arrived guests, her adventure in the Giant Mountains, through which she had made so many agreeable friends. All agreed that the countess was a beautiful and amiable lady; and was only mad upon the subject of her supposed adventure. They avoided her when she spoke of this; and the countess, who thought the joke had gone too far, spoke no more about it. Then the doctor praised the wondrous healing virtues of the waters, because they had so completely cured the lady.

When she was quite well, and the young ladies had been admired enough, they took their way back to Breslau. Intentionally they went by way of the Giant Mountains, in order to keep their promise with the hospitable overseer; and at the same time, to have the enigma solved by him, why the guests would not acknowledge their first interview.

But no one knew how to direct them to Herr Von Riesenthal's castle; neither was his name known on this, or on the other side of the mountains.

By this time, the countess was convinced that the unknown, who had been so kind to them, was no other than Number Nip, the mountain Spirit. She had every reason to be content with the vengeance he had taken to punish her disbelief in his existence; and willingly pardoned him the trick with the people at the baths, which was now quite comprehensible and clear to her.

THE KNIGHT OF FISCHBACH.

background to the Giant Mountains, rise two granite cones, which are known by the name of the "Falcon Rocks." On one of them there stood in the twelfth century a proud castle, in which there dwelt a powerful robber named Protzco; he was also called the "mountain falcon." He was a wild sort of man, much feared in the neighbourhood. He spent all the money which he had stolen from travellers and merchants, in gaming and drinking with his boon companions; and so he led a jovial life in his stronghold.

One evening he sat in a high chamber of his castle, with the cup of wine standing untasted before him; his comrades mocked him, but a wild, severe glance from the knight silenced them.

Suddenly a servant entered the room, with the information that on the road to Schmiedeberg there was a heavily laden waggon containing valuable merchandize. With a wild shout the robbers sprang up from the table, and seized their swords; only Protzco did not move, and his companions, rushing forth into the dark night, left him alone.

He was seldom the last at such freaks as these; but this was the anniversary of the day on which his gentle mother died, and for this reason, there came no jest from the knight's lips; and no wine touched them, while his sword, which was generally covered with blood, lay quietly in its sheath.

Well, he was left alone, and he walked up and down the silent chamber with heavy strides. At last he opened the window, and leaning out, looked into the dark night. He listened to the stamping of the horses, and the wild shouts of his comrades; and now and then he heard shrieks of terror, which echoed curiously through the dark night air.

"Saddle my horse!" he cried, and running down into the courtyard, he seized his sword, and in a few moments was on his black charger,



The cup of wine standing untasted before him.

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rushing down the steep descent from the Falcon Rocks. He rushed like a storm-cloud towards the robbers, and the report of his gun shot through the air.

"Give the prisoners their liberty!" cried he, as he saw a man bound between two of his companions. "Let them go their way; or by my beard, you shall feel the power of my arm."

The robbers murmured, but Protzco was their most powerful comrade, and his strong castle their safest refuge.

They resolved therefore, to give in to his odd humour; and set the merchant at liberty.

But the man sank to the ground, for in his brave defence, he had received a deep wound upon his neck, and his body was covered with blood.

Protzco bent down to look at him, and an expression of compassion crossed his face.

"Take the poor man in your arms up to my castle. He must be nursed and attended to. Drag up the waggon also; but whoever lays hands on this man's goods, will have to answer for it to me," cried he, in a loud tone.

"The falcon is changed into the mouse,"

sneered the robbers, in an under-tone, but none ventured to contradict the angry Protzco, who walked gloomily and steadily before the procession towards his castle. There they tended the stranger merchant as well as could be; his horses were taken care of, and the chests of merchandize which he had with him, were guarded by the lord of the castle himself.

Weeks elapsed before the sick man recovered, and was able to continue his journey. With many thanks he at last separated from his kind friend, who not only returned him his goods safe and uninjured, but also gave him two of his most powerful horses, in order that he might the more speedily finish his journey.

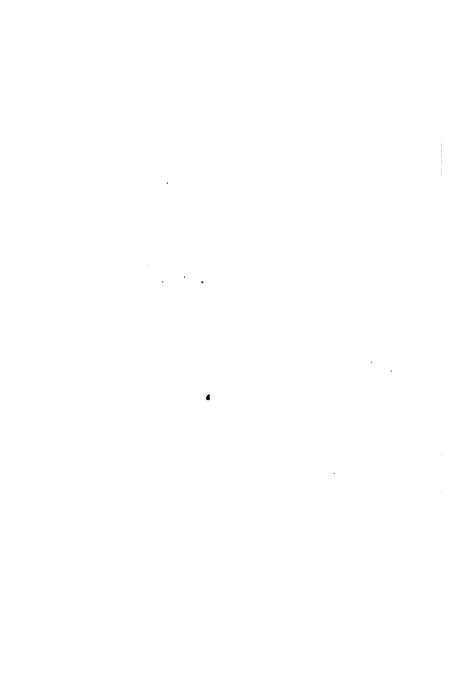
The companions of the robber were very much discontented with this untimely generosity; and grumbled at losing so rich a prize. And when, soon after, Duke Folko sent out his men to take the robber knight, they scandalously betrayed him to the officers, who ransacked the castle of Falconberg, and the knight himself only escaped from them with great trouble.

Forsaken and betrayed by his faithless friends, the fugitive wandered about the whole night; when suddenly he perceived the very



"Come with me into my poor hut, good knight," said he.

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merchant to whom he had been so kind, standing in a fisherman's dress before him.

"Come with me into my poor hut, good knight," said he, kindly to Protzco, "you will find safety and shelter there. Through many misfortunes I have become very poor, and now I dwell here quiet and solitary as a fisherman. Here, no one will think of seeking the brave knight of Falconberg, and I shall thus be able to repay you in part for all the kindness you showed me."

Protzco did not refuse this offer; and his host entertained him hospitably with meat and drink; but the next morning, when the knight awoke, the fisherman had disappeared, leaving to his guest all his fishing tackle. By means of this Protzco earned his living. Meanwhile the duke's servants destroyed his castle, and then left it.

After some time the knight was able to come out from his hiding-place. He yearned for his former mode of living; and though he abominated the useless and wicked life which he had led, still he was troubled to have lost his good sword, and to hold a fishing rod instead of it.

Sadly he dipped his line into the clear little brook which flowed not far from his hut; it was again the anniversary of the day on which his mother had died, and sad and weary thoughts oppressed Protzco's heart.

All at once, a fish of most extraordinary size caught hold of his hook, and he had the greatest difficulty in bringing it to land. He was obliged to wade deeply into the brook to disengage its fangs, when lo! the fish was made of rich pure gold, and for the first time it became clear to the knight, that that merchant whom he had once compassionated, was no other than the powerful Spirit of the Giant Mountains, Number Nip.

Rich once more, he gathered some followers together, and in the poorly populated eastern mountain valleys he built a new castle, in the selfsame place where his refuge, the fisherman's little hut, had stood.

Very soon the knight's castle reared its head in the middle of the wood; he built thick walls and a high tower to it, and gave it, in grateful remembrance of the means by which he had been enabled to erect it, the name of "Fischbach" (or Fish-brook).

Then he built a village; and at last, by the aid of the mountain Spirit, there stood the noble

castle and the lovely village, which is even now one of the most celebrated and beautiful spots in the mountain valley. It is visited by many travellers, and belongs to one of the most honourable and universally beloved of noble families.

THE MAGIC STICK.

STUDENT was once wandering over the dark blue chain of the Giant Mountains, looking earnestly for the hundreds and thousands of small wonders which bloom and grow in the world of plants, and knocking at rocks for minerals. He had his botanic cases hanging over his shoulder; they were heavy, and the wayfarer appeared to be very tired.

"Now if I could only be in Schmiedeberg by making one step," said he, half aloud; "for were I there, I could dig and spread out the plants which I have found, and then place them among my other curious specimens." But before he could reach Schmiedeberg, the botanist had still to walk two long hours, and already the sun was very low.

The traveller was just gathering new strength

to proceed, when suddenly the bent form of an old man appeared among the bushes, carrying, apparently with great difficulty, a heavy bundle of wood.

"Old man," said the strong healthy young one, "that is hard work for you; have you no one at home who can do it for you?"

The person thus addressed, turned his astonished face to the young man, displaying a pair of clear sparkling eyes, and a sharp aquiline nose, and replied,

"Who can carry it home for me? I have neither wife, child, nor any other friend or relation."

"Then give it to me," said the student kindly. "That is no weight for my shoulders." So saying, he took the burden from the man, and carried it on his back along with his case of plants, a good way down the mountain.

"Going back again! oh, dear, my poor plants!" he sighed softly to himself, but at the same time walking at a good pace. He lost a whole half-hour through his goodness, but at last they reached the cottage. The young man threw down the bundle

of wood on the floor, and bid the old man good night; but he called after him, to stop him.

"How much farther have you to go tonight?" asked he.

"Oh, to Schmiedeberg; I have friends there, and there I can arrange my plants."

"Ay, ay! but they will do very well till the morning. Remain here, kind sir, and see the sun rise; to-morrow will be a splendid day."

"But only think, I have been many days from home already, and all my money is spent. I could not pay my lodging even for one night. My friends will give me more, though they always grumble at my travels costing me so much. What can I do then? Had I any money, I should not leave you empty handed, my good old man."

"Then a good journey to you, and as you have such a long way to go, take a stick from the bundle of wood which you have carried so far for me; it will aid you in climbing."

The wanderer laughingly accepted the old man's present, for he was too kind-hearted to pain him by a refusal. He pushed back his cap, and took the stick to continue his way. But

behold there he stood, in the very middle of the town already, by the ancient town hall, knocking at the door of his friend's house. He thought he was in a dream; he struck his forehead, but he was wide awake; the plant cases hung heavily on his shoulders, and in his hand he held the stick which the old man had given him.

"My absence of mind has played me a trick, and I have come all the way without noticing," thought he, as he entered the house. The plants were dried and arranged; the mosses were spread out, with their respective names written beneath them. He thought no more of his adventure, and the stick lay unnoticed in a corner. Thus some time passed; but before long, the desire for another journey entered his mind.

"Ah!" thought he, "if I could only go a long way in the world; but I must remain here, and take a situation. If I had a handful of nice gold now, nothing should keep me from taking my travelling staff in my hand, and setting out."

"When God will us great favour show, He sends us o'er the wide, wide world, Where we may all his wonders view, In mountain, valley, stream, and field." And he took the stick sadly from its corner, turning it slowly in his hands, and thinking how delightful it would be to wander through the Alps to Trieste. Scarcely had the thought passed through his mind, when he stood on the highest of the mountains; it was spring time, and there lay the Adriatic Sea, in all its beauty and glory, and the great and beautiful city at his feet.

With eyes full of delight, he watched the sunset; and then he danced for joy. A glance at the tough unsightly stick, explained to him the wonder.

And now the student had his greatest wish fulfilled, and the world is indebted to him for many curious botanical discoveries.

But at last he returned to his native country, a tired old man, and went up to the Giant Mountains, there to lay down the wonderful stick.

If one could but find it!

NUMBER NIP AND THE LYING PEASANT.

HE mountain sprite

Crept down one night,

Below into the valley bright.

Now in his way

There chanced to stray

A peasant, who his path did stay.

And this man asked,
"Pray have you passed
Old Number Nip upon the waste?"
"No, no," replied
The Gnome with pride,
And then he took an angry stride.

"I'll make you skip,
Sir Snap and Snip!
Ha! Hum! Who's he pray? Number Nip?"
"Not know the sprite,
With beard so white?
Not know the far-famed fairy wight?"

"Sometimes this Gnome
Will leave his home
Upon the mountains high to roam."
Then the man told
The legends old
Of Number Nip the Spirit bold.

"But in your ear,
This mountaineer
Has learnt, at last, what 'tis to fear;
His fiery steed,
Not taking heed,
Ran right against me in his speed.

"Trembling with fright,
Down fell the sprite,
Hey! presto! Lo! I held him tight,
Then my rosary
Of beads so gay,
I shook well to send him away.

"On that he gazed,
And sore amazed,
The demon fled—may heaven be praised.
"Pumpkin grower!
Turnip sower!

Simpletons only fear thy power!"

"When thus I cried, Lo! with a stride

The Spirit 'mid the rocks did glide.

Pale turned the moon

As he went down,

The mountains shook with fearsome groan.

"Now through the gloom I've bravely come,

And fast I'm hastening to my home."

In this big wise,

The man replies,

But knowing all his words were lies.

With angry frown, And awful tone,

The sprite then spoke, "Is your tale done?

Well, now I say,

This Spirit may

Punish you well without delay!

"I'd have you know, You see him now!

I'm he, and I'll punish you, I vow!"

He struck a blow;

In a moment, lo!

From the fellow's head two long ears grow!

"So, Sirrah, so!
Now you can show
That Number Nip right well you know.
When people sneer,
And loud declare
"Tis false, you can swear by each ass's ear!"

HANS AND THE DONKEY.

ANS and his sister Marie worked for a peasant in Stonsdorf, a village of the Giant Mountains, lying about three miles from Warmbrunn, and situated close by the Prudelburg, an immense mass of granite, in which is to be seen Rischmann's Cave, whence it is said the prophet Rischmann gave his wise sayings forth to the world.

These two children were both so economical and industrious, that they had soon saved up a little sum of money. With this they one day set out to Warmbrunn market, where they intended to buy a cow for their poor mother.

On their way they sat down to rest; and they counted their money, and built their castles in the air. They wished to improve their old tumbled-down house, and add a field to it. Then how happy their mother would be in her old age! "And," said Hans, "if I can only get money enough to buy some corn to sow, when it is grown, reaped, and sold, I shall be able to buy a horse, which shall be as well trapped as a nobleman's. I shall be so pleased to ride to market through the town, so that people may think a rich farmer is coming on his nag." Then as Hans put the purse back into his jacket pocket, a fine donkey suddenly sprang out of the thicket, and ran right into the boy's arms.

"Ah, now, this is a good beginning," laughed Hans, and seizing the donkey, he held it fast by a rope which was tied round his neck.

"Brother, you surely will not keep the donkey?" asked Marie, anxiously.

"You silly little thing!" replied he; "you do not think I would be so wicked. If I should like to be a rich man, and lead an easy life, yet surely I would not be a thief. God forbid! You go into the thicket, while I search this side, to see if we cannot find the donkey's master."

The brother and sister looked, and shouted, and waited for nearly an hour, but no one came to seek for the animal; and as they were obliged to hasten to Warmbrunn, because they had to be back again by the evening, they took the donkey with them, hoping to meet with the owner on their way. Hans guided the strong beautiful creature by a cord, but when he had gone a few steps he thought,

"Why should I not make myself more comfortable?" So saying, he sprang on the donkey, and began to ride, while Marie held the cord. For a little while they got on very well. Suddenly the donkey began to caper about, kicking out his feet, and making such a crooked back, that Hans was terribly tumbled about; he scarcely knew where his head was. He would fain have dismounted, but the animal would not stand still a moment; he broke the cord by which Marie led him, and then capered up to a great hole, into which he threw his alarmed rider, whose ears tingled with the fall. There lay our hero quite still, and scarcely able to move. His sister came weeping, to help him to get up again, while the ass trotted towards the mountains, and disappeared.

The poor bruised boy crept quite downhearted to his sister's side. However, at last they came to Warmbrunn, and found a good cow at a tolerably reasonable price; but just when Hans was going to count out his money he looked at his sister, with a face pale as ashes. The purse was gone!—it had fallen from his pocket during his foolish donkey ride.

Now their sorrow was really distressing; there stood brother and sister amid all the ruin of their hopes. The seller of the cow thought that he had to do with sly thieves, who only wanted to deceive him; so he called the police, who was going to put Hans in prison; but Marie implored so earnestly for her innocent brother, that at last they let them both go in peace, and they had only a crowd of street boys following them, which made poor Marie so ashamed that her eyes were full of tears.

On their way home, the sorrowing children sought all through the bushes, hoping, that perhaps they might find their purse, but it was all in vain.

"It is Number Nip, and none other, who has played us this trick," said Hans, angrily. "I wish I had the wicked Spirit standing before me now, so that he might feel the power of my strong arm. I should be glad even, if he would kill me in his rage, because to return to my mother with empty hands, is bitter indeed."

"Hans," said his sister, "I think the mountain Spirit only wished to teach us a good lesson. Why did we want more happiness, when we ought to have been joyful and contented with buying a cow for our poor mother?"

Hans was silent, and the children went again to their work; Marie in the stall to milk the cows, and Hans to chop straw; but he was so miserable that he could not work properly, and his chopper fell to pieces.

"Give me a bit of cord," cried he to Marie in the cow-shed.

Marie felt in her pocket, where she had put the end of the cord which she held in her hand when the donkey broke loose. Hans tried to tie the bundle of hay with it, but the rope was brittle, and broke, and when the hemp fell about, it gleamed and glittered brightly.

Hans looked at it in astonishment; there was the cord all made of real golden threads; so the brother and sister became rich all at once!

By the sale of the cord, they were able to buy two fine cows, and add to their piece of ground; and they made their mother's little cottage quite nice, while they took care of her with true watchfulness and love. Hans never forgot the lesson of the mountain spirit; and although his wealth increased from year to year, he still remained simple minded, so that he always, as formerly, went to market on foot; and never rode his horses for convenience or show, but only drove them to the fields. People say that he is cured of riding for ever!

HOW NUMBER NIP PUNISHED CHEATING.

"OW, thank Heaven! we are at the top!" exclaimed three cloth-makers from Gorlitz, when they had reached the pass of Schmiedeberg. They laid down their bundles, and wiped the perspiration from their foreheads.

They were going to Bohemia, and just sat down for a short time to rest. While they were so doing, there came by a fine rich-looking man, who spoke to them, and when he heard that they had cloth to sell, he said, "I will buy it all of you." He did so; although the men asked an extravagant price, and he paid them in golden ducats. When they had concluded their bargain, the three cloth-makers continued their journey; and after they had gone some distance, they took the ducats out of their

pockets, laughing at having cheated the stranger so easily. But to their great astonishment, they found only copper coins.

They immediately turned back to the place where they had rested on the way. There they met a coach and six horses, in which sat the gentleman. They told him that he had given them copper halfpence instead of golden ducats.

"Let me see," said the stranger; but when they opened their purses every coin they contained was good gold. The men stood petrified, while the gentleman said:

"Could you not tell good pure gold from rubbish? But if you do not like it, I will pay you the price in thalers." So saying, he paid them in silver money.

Again they went on their way, very well pleased; and after a short time they looked again to see if the thalers were safe in their purses. But, oh, dear! nothing was inside now but bits of glass and rubbish! They hastened back with all speed, and fortunately there stood the carriage in the old place.

The gentleman asked what they wanted by coming to him again.

They demanded back their cloth.

But he was very angry, and said, "they had been paid honestly; and they must now go quietly on their way."

With that he set off at a galloping pace down the pass, whilst the miserable cloth-makers set out again, moaning and lamenting as they went. But when they came to Libau, and emptied out their bags, there were indeed good thalers in it, but only exactly the price which was proper for them to have asked had they been honest. Not a farthing more. Their unrighteous gain was thus lost; besides which they had had the trouble of going the same way so many times.

Then the cloth-makers knew who the strange gentleman had been, and ever after they often thought of the proverb—

"Let no man ask more than his due, for in so doing, he defrauds his neighbour."

THE THREE PEDLARS.

NE day, Number Nip sat upon the stone which is called "Number Nip's chair," looking down into the world below, and thinking of one thing and another. Presently there came three travellers, over the Stormy Cap, and by their conversation, Number Nip found they were travelling merchants, or pedlars, as we should now call them.

- "What do you travel in?" asked one. "Train oil," replied the second. "And I," said the first, "in carriage grease."
- "A good article," replied the other; "and you, sir?" said he, turning to the third.
 - "In Limburg cheese," was the answer.
- "A celebrated and well-known article. Beats Swiss cheese; and very little more Dutch cheese will be made," cried the other two.

Number Nip heard, but understood not a

word of all this. How any one could travel in train oil, and carriage grease, yes, even in Limburg cheese, was quite incomprehensible to him.

"In the meantime," thought he, "I will listen to what more they have to say." But what did he hear?

The wayfarers had sat down upon a rock, not noticing the man who was looking at them, and taking out of their knapsacks wine and venison, they began to make very merry. The more they drank, the more communicative they became; and Number Nip soon found whose wicked children they were. He discovered that they went round to people's houses offering their different goods, and then they told each other the manner in which they sold them. Thus he learnt their wickedness at their own lips. He was astonished at the boldness of the young One observed that the more impudent one was, the more was to be got; and if the people were rich, they must be still more importunate and teasing; because generally such folks would buy, merely to be rid of them.

"How can people be so blind?" thought Number Nip, "that they do not perceive the abominable tricks these rascals play them; for of these pedlars—" but he would listen no longer to their talk; and left the rock in a rage.

At last the travellers continued their way, turning by the path of the Elbe Fall. Suddenly the beautiful weather changed, and a thick fog surrounded them. The pedlars walked as it were in clouds; this put them all in a very ill humour. One was cross, because the damp spoiled his fine curls; it took the stiffness out of the other one's ruffles and cuffs; and the third made his boots very dirty by walking in the mud.

But their ill-humour was much increased, when the one who pretended he knew the way, lost it; and they found themselves amongst swamps, trees, and bits of stone and weeds. They wandered here and there, and still they could not find their way again.

At last the ill-humoured trio came to a river, which on account of the fog, they could not see across. Suddenly a man of very curious appearance stood before them. He filled a glass from the river, and said: "Gentlemen, you must pledge me in a bumper."

One of them putting the glass to his nose, smelt at it and said, "Itis train oil."

"Yes," replied the stranger, "and you must drink to me in it; or you do not move from this place."

"This is what you travel in," said the young man, reaching the glass to one of his companions. But he could not taste it, and shudderingly said, "he was neither a Greenlander nor made of shoe-leather; and he could not drink such stuff."

"But," replied the strange man, in a terrible voice, "you say you travel in train oil, and, if you do not drink, you shall not leave this place alive. I say this for the last time."

"Oh, do drink!" shrieked the others, while fear brought tears to their eyes.

So the poor wretch closed his eyes, gave two or three shudders, one gulp, and emptied the glass down his throat. Presently the fog cleared off a little; and the stranger, stepping on one side, quickly disappeared amongst the rocks. The travellers then perceived a bridge, which carried them safely over the river.

Now they thought they were out of all danger, for they heard the rushing of the Elbe Fall very near; but all at once the path descended amidst rocks, whose perpendicular walls

surrounded them on all sides. Presently they arrived at another river, whose black waves glided slowly past, and on the bank stood a tablet, on which was inscribed "Through!"

One of them stooped down, tasted the river, smelt it, and said: "This is carriage grease! We must be enchanted and bewitched!"

"Oh, now, that is what you deal in; and you must go through it first, or we will throw you into the black soup, and use your back for a bridge."

They did not really intend to do this, but they wanted to frighten him; and seeing there was nothing else to be done, he, after a great deal of demur, stepped into the abominable stream, the others slowly following him. At last they reached terra firma on the opposite bank, where they again saw the same curious looking man, who had given them some of the train oil river to drink. He was leaning on a rock, laughing maliciously, and said,

"Now, you dirty people, you are well besmeared, and may go your way. Perhaps you will not soon forget the lesson you have received, and beware of again bedaubing others."

So saying, this strange man disappeared

among the trees. The road in which the way-farers now found themselves, became much broader and more even; and the leader said that now he thought he knew where he was. And so it proved, for as the mist cleared away, they could see the cottages of the village of Schreiberschau lying in deep shadow before them.

At this place the young men had ordered that a carriage should await them; and they were soon (more especially the third) seated very comfortably, with all their troubles and difficulties ended, on the soft cushions, and started very contentedly for Warmbrunn. There they entered the Prussian Crown Inn, where many people were assembled in the tents, drinking coffee.

The young merchants hurriedly made themselves smart, combed their untidy hair, and tried to look as handsome and nice as possible before they went among the ladies. But the fair dames turned from the travellers with all signs of disgust, putting their handkerchiefs or their smelling bottles to their noses.

"Oh! what a fright you are! What is the matter?" asked two of the friends of the third,

on entering the saloon; and "oh!—how nasty you do smell!"

Fancy his vexation and amazement, when, on quickly changing his coat, he discovered that it looked very peculiar, for, lo! instead of carriage cushions, he had been sitting in the Limburg cheese!

That was a sly joke Number Nip played those three young men. If the mountain Spirit does still exist, he would still find enough to do; for there are very queer people who travel through the Giant Mountains.

HOW NUMBER NIP HELPED A PEASANT.

NCE upon a time, a nobleman lived in the mountains; he was a harsh, proud man, and ill-used his people dreadfully, seeming to think that poor men were brought into the world only to suffer cruel treatment. One day he commanded a peasant to go to the forest, and fetch an immense oak, which had been hewn down, and bring it to the castle. It was useless to oppose the words of the nobleman, and this the poor wretch who received the order, very well knew; so he took his horse out of the stable, although he felt it was impossible for it to drag the heavy oak tree all that way. He tried only to move it from its place, but it was quite in vain. The poor peasant lamented and cried, for he knew that the nobleman had only imposed the task upon him, as a pretext for

furnishing himself with an object on which he could vent his passion.

While he was still standing very miserable by the oak, a man came past; he asked the peasant why he was so sad.

"Ah!" replied the poor fellow, "you cannot help me." However, he told his story to the stranger.

"Be comforted, my friend," replied the latter; "go quietly home; I will soon have the tree where you wish that it should be."

The stranger was Number Nip, and I think nobody else will ever be able to do the wonderful things which he did.

He took the oak, with its great outspreading branches, in his hand, and carried it into the village, as easily as if it had been a walking-stick. There he laid it before the cruel man's door, in such a manner that people could neither go out nor in. The nobleman ordered it to be removed, but it was as heavy as iron; and although the workmen exerted all their strength, they could not move it an inch. Nothing could be done, and the nobleman found he must have a new door made in the wall; but as it would have cost a great deal of

money, he commanded the peasant to come and make it, as a punishment for having put the tree in such a place. But when the man told his story, and how the stranger had put the oak there, the nobleman at once saw that Number Nip had had a hand in the business; and he stood in such fear and awe of the Spirit, that he permitted the peasant to go in peace; and since that time has been a milder and better man. Such was the great respect which Number Nip had created for himself all around.

THE THREE CARPENTERS.

NE day three young carpenters were wandering over the highest of the Giant Mountains. One of them had been ill of a fever, and was still very weak. He came from Erfurt, and the other two from Schmiedeberg. The poor youth from Erfurt was so tired, that he could scarcely walk; but he was forced to go on, for the three companions had very little money, and therefore they could not stop very often at inns on their way. They were going to Prague, where they hoped to obtain work. They passed Hainfall, from which place, up to the chapel of St. Anne of Seydorf there is a path. There the Erfurt man sighed: "Now I can go no farther. I must rest; you two go on; I will no longer be a burden to you"

"Why should we not all rest?" said the other two. "A little repose would do us good

too, and here, under the fir-trees, are cool shade and soft moss."

While they were all three enjoying the quiet, they heard close by them the sound of a gun, which made them spring to their feet. At the edge of an overhanging rock, they perceived a sportsman, who looked at them and then disappeared. A moment afterwards, they heard a rustling, and then a fawn broke through the bushes, and with one bound stood before the three friends.

"Ah, that will give us food for some days to come," said one of them, "and if we sell the skin, we shall be able to pay for a good many nights' lodgings."

"But stolen goods never prosper," said the Erfurt man; "let the fawn go—it is not ours."

"Idiot!" sneered the two Schmiedeberg men, "shall it lie here and rot? The hunter had no dog to scent it out, and so the beast will only find some one else who is not so stupid as we. No! no! we will make free with it; and if you will not have a part, so much the better for us."

So saying, they killed the wounded animal,

and mockingly threw the entrails to their companion. He carefully turned them over with his stick. Lo! they shone and glittered in a most wonderful manner. On looking closer into them, he discovered a golden bullet, then a second, and a third. The two Schmiedeberg men were not a little astonished; they knew now who the hunter had been, and thought to themselves.

"Ah! we should be free from all care and want, had we not thrown him the entrails." But the young man generously divided the golden bullets with his companions; and they joyfully carried the fawn to a poor woman who had six hungry children. There was, indeed, a day of rejoicing in the little thatched cottage; and its inmates found food for a long while from the meat which the three young carpenters had given them, who, in the meantime, arrived at Prague, where they soon found good employment.

HOW NUMBER NIP MADE A PIGTAIL FOR A WOODMAN.

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berg, which is situated very high up in the mountains, there lived a woodman, of whom it was said that he very well understood the art of bragging, and that the history of his adventures, which he was continually relating, savoured very strongly of Baron Munchausen's wonderful travels. Very often of a Sunday evening at the ale-house, he would tell such strange tales that they scarcely knew where their heads were. Number Nip heard of this, but for a long time forbore to take any notice of it; because in other respects, the man was a good soul, and, barring his long wonderful stories, the people liked him.

But one evening, he had paid the minister of Seydorf a visit, and afterwards the parson accompanied him home. As they slowly ascended the mountain path which led to St. Anne's Chapel, and its surrounding gravestones, the woodman began about his adventures and travels.

"Ah, sir, many things have happened to me, which others would give a great deal of money to have met with; and now they are so envious, that they will not believe the truth of what I tell them. Only think, for example, of the most horrible cruelties that are perpetrated in Spain by pirates. I shudder even now when I think of them. That, however, is not what I intend to tell, but it is this: Once when I went out at twilight into a wood, I saw a brown animal moving slowly about. 'Hold!' thought I, 'that is certainly a cow!' I had been a long time without meat, so I took my gun and fired. But fancy my astonishment when I went up to it, and found it to be a frog—a huge frog, as big as an ox!"

"Friend," interrupted the minister, "take care what you say; the frog was surely a little smaller than what you would make me believe."

[&]quot;No, I have not exaggerated its size an inch.

It was like a monstrous ox. I skinned it, and had the skin tanned; then I had a pair of breeches, a waistcoat, and a coat made out of it, and they are so warm and watertight, that I can stand quite comfortably in the rain in them, or wade through a morass and not be in the least wet."

"Ah! your story is very wonderful. It seems exactly as though it were not true."

"Yes, does it not?" continued the forester. "So a great many have told me. But how astounded you will be, when I tell you a still more wonderful tale. I had a dog, a pointer; many times I might have sold him for two hundred thalers. He would stand firm as a wall, and this good quality was at last the cause of his death. Listen how. I go one morning into the forest, take the dog with me, but do not think farther about him. As I am returning home, I call the dog, but he is nowhere to be seen. I wander about the whole day, I search through every bush, I call and whistle, but no trace of the dog. 'He is lost, and has been shot,' I thought, and for a long time I could not forget the beautiful creature. But hear now, friend, what happened about a year after. I went again through the forest; there, on a little bank, I saw something white; I approached it. Imagine my astonishment! When I came near, I saw an assemblage of twelve skeletons of birds, and before them the skeleton of my dog, whom I knew by the double set of fangs which he had. The dog had seen a flight of partridges, and as, through fear, they had not ventured to fly from him, they had perished with the faithful animal."

The parson laughingly shook his head.

"Don't you think that very remarkable, sir?" continued the forester. "But now I have not told you the best part of it. As a remembrance of the poor dog, I had a pipe made out of one of his leg bones. I have it with me now. As I was one day smoking it, and walking by some bushes, it shook suddenly in my mouth, so that my teeth cracked. In astonishment, I took the pipe from my mouth, but it moved about just as much in my hands. I began to suspect how it was; I looked down to see, and there, right behind the bushes, was a crowd of partridges, before which the bone pipe jumped and pointed, just the same as

the living dog used to do. Ah! what wonderful things we live to see!"

"No; that is rather too much, friend," said the parson. "If you tell any more lies I am afraid something will happen to us."

The forester got very angry at this; and kept insisting that what he had spoken, was only truth—he could call a hundred witnesses to the fact, only it was difficult to get them together. When they had gone a little farther, the parson chanced to lag a few steps behind.

"Friend," cried he, "what have you got behind you?"

The forester turned round and saw a long hairy thing hanging from his head, and reaching to the ground.

"It is a pigtail!" said the parson, "and has grown to you."

"Yes, a pigtail!" said, all at once, a voice behind them, "and you will wear it, friend woodman, until you have learned not to tell lies."

It was Number Nip who said it, and then disappeared. The two men stood petrified with astonishment. At last, however, the parson began to return home quietly. The woodman

tried in vain to get rid of his pigtail; but if he cut it off, it only grew again in a moment, longer than ever. There was no way then to be rid of it, but by leaving off telling lies. This was a difficult task enough for him, but what was to be done? What, however, a man seriously resolves, that he can do; and at last he succeeded. Since that time, however, if anybody exaggerates, the saying in that village, and everywhere around is: "We will make him a pigtail."

THE GAMBLER.

YOUNG man from the village of Agatendorf was climbing up to the coral rocks, and as he went he sang so clearly, that he could be heard all through the mountains. Number Nip, who was standing near, heard the carol, and thought to himself,

"There seems to be a happy man coming along. We will just see whether he is a good one as well."

So the mountain Spirit assumed the form of an old barrel-organ player, who used to sit in summer time at the foot of the mountain, and welcome travellers with his music, for which they would give him a few halfpence. But to-day the old man did not happen to be at his post, for he had gone to play at a wedding in the village. So the Spirit sat there instead of him, and began to play the tune of "Happy and Cheerfully." When the youth came near to the organ man, he took out his purse and threw him a groschen, after which he went his way, singing and whistling, and not staying for the old man's thanks.

"A pleasant journey to you," cried Number Nip cheerily after him, and also went his way. But the young man walked on until he came to the Elbe meadows. There he saw several young people playing at bowls. He could never pass by a gaming table or a bowling green, without having a game, and now his fingers itched to try his luck. He stood as though transfixed to the spot; his joyful song ceased, and his eyes greedily watched the bowls as they went rolling along the soft green grass. Presently the young people asked him to join their game; saying, perhaps he might win something. Our youth waited no second invitation, and, beginning to play, he gained one groschen after another, and very soon he had won a good sum.

Presently darkness spread over the mountains, but still he was not satisfied; the others had wished to leave off long ago, and the clock had struck a late hour of the evening already. From that moment, the young man

kept losing his winnings one after the other; and when they were all gone, he lost the money which he had to pay for his journey; and very soon had not a farthing left in his pocket.

As he was going away, very sad at heart, over the Elbe meadows, one of the young men with whom he had been playing, cried out, that he should at least take one of the ninepins witl: him as a remembrance.

"Ah," thinks our youth, "It's a droll present; and now I think of it, how could the players be up here on the mountains, unless it be some trick of Number Nip's? Perhaps the ninepins will turn to gold!" So saying, he put all theninepins secretly into his pocket; he only left. the balls lying, for what he had, was quiteheavy enough; he could scarcely carry them. Presently he took a ninepin out of his pocket to see whether it had turned into gold; but, oh! it was no agreeable joke of Number Nip's. The deceived youth had put his hand into a quantity of mud and filth, and a loud shriek of mocking laughter told him that the mountain Spirit had in this way punished his love of gambling.

I am afraid this good lesson did not cure the young man, but I hope it did. In the mountains may still be seen "Number Nip's ninepins," and they testify to the truth of this tale.

NUMBER NIP AND THE TAILOR.

HE mountain Spirit once came to Landeshut, carrying a little bundle of cloth under his arm. He saw a girl drawing water from a well, and inquired of her if she knew a tailor. The girl directed him to a house very When he had gone in, and politely ordered the tailor to make him a coat from the cloth, the shrewd tradesman thought to himself: "I wonder if he comes from Landeshut? I do not often have such grand gentlemen to work for." So he doubled the cloth, thus bringing it to half the size, and then put on a grave face, as though he should have great trouble in making the coat out of so little stuff. In the meantime, Number Nip chatted with the other customers, seeming as though he did not observe the tailor's trick.

The man having promised that the coat

should be ready in a week's time, Number Nip went away. When the week was over, he sent a servant to fetch the coat, and told him to say that the next time his master passed that way, he would bring him more work, and pay him for what he had already done.

"All right," said the tailor, and he thought to himself, "I shall make a good thing out of this."

But when another week had passed, and the stranger did not appear, the tailor began to ponder, and he determined to sell the cloth of which he had defrauded the gentleman; so that he might not lose his payment.

"I have trusted a gentleman this time, but I never will again," said he. Then he went to get the cloth down from the shelf, instead of which, he found nothing but a cloak woven of reeds. This seemed wonderful indeed to him.

Now, it happened that some time after, when he went with some friends to the Koppe mountain, he met Number Nip, riding very merrily upon a ram.

"Have you come to fetch the money for the coat which you made me?" cried he to the frightened tailor. Everything grew clear to the man; but a real tailor is very shrewd, and always knows how to help himself in time of need.

"Gracious sir," said he, "I do not come up the mountains on that account. I will always serve you, and let you have credit as long as it pleases you."

"Now as you are so indulgent, I will prove myself grateful," said Number Nip. "I will make you a present of my steed; but woe to you if you do not use it."

The tailor had no courage left, although that may seem hard to believe. He did not relish the idea of setting himself upon the ram, who was now standing bolt upright upon his hind legs.

Number Nip, however, took the terrified man by the hand and lifted him into the saddle, but he lifted him up as high as a church steeple, for the mountain Spirit thought he was going to lift a hundred pounds' weight, instead of which the tailor weighed very little more than fifty. In so doing the Spirit's glove flew off his hand, and there it remains to this day, not far from Number Nip's throne.

Scarcely was the little tailor seated on his

curious charger, than it trotted away with him; and as all his friends took hold of its tail, they reached the place they were bound for as quickly as the tailor. But wherever they went, the people laughed at them, and yet the tailor dared not get down from the hateful beast, for ever so long, because he feared the anger of the mountain Spirit.

And as in every new customer who came to him he dreaded to find Number Nip, he took care never to repeat the dishonest trick which he had once committed; and from that time he became the most honourable and honest tailor in the world.



As all his friends took hold of its tail, they reached the place they were bound for.

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THE RICH BAKER.

NCE upon a time there lived a rich baker, in Hirschberg, who was mighty in the affairs of the town, and he would talk very grandly at the inn room, where he and his fellow citizens used to assemble to drink their beer and wine of an evening; but he was very harsh and unkind to the persons who worked for him, and to the peasants who brought him wood for his furnace. He would seek out those who were in the greatest necessity, then he would make them a little advance of money, thus putting them under an obligation to him, and then he was able to beat down their wages as much as he liked.

Now, one day it happened that a poor peasant brought him a load of wood (the man's wages had already been sorely cut down), and when he had unloaded in the rich baker's courtyard, he paid the poor peasant eightpence too little. The man was very much astonished at this, and in the most pathetic and heart-rending tone, told the baker what trouble he had had—how the waggon had been injured, and the horses tired, and that it would not pay if he did not receive the sum agreed upon; but the wicked man only replied shortly, that the peasant might gather all his wood together, and take it home again if he would not be satisfied with what was given him.

This was easily enough said, but the poor peasant would lose a day's work by that. also wanted to buy seed, that he might sow So what was there for him to do but to submit quietly? Then he left the town quite down-hearted and sorrowful. Had he complained of the baker in a court of justice, he would have been obliged to wait a long time before his case would have been decided; and also he would have had to pay a great deal, for lawyers' justice is not for poor people, only for rich ones. So he went on his way, sorrowful and distressed, and related his misfortune to a neighbour, who returned home with him in his empty cart.

Number Nip, who was also coming out of the city just at the same time, heard the sad story, and he resolved to give the rich citizen a lesson.

"Were he only to cross my path," said the Spirit, "I would soon cure him!"

But the baker always took pretty good care never to take a journey into the mountains; indeed he was much too stingy for that.

One day as he was sitting in his dressing-room, drinking a glass of warm beer, a man came to him and said that he had heard he wanted a wood-cutter; and he offered himself as such, saying that he would charge very little for his services. The baker looked at the man in astonishment, for he did not seem at all like a woodcutter; but avarice and selfishness had so blinded him, that he took him without more ado, to the wood-yard, and there showed him more than five great heaps of wood which were to be split.

"How much will you charge for that job?" asked he, curiously.

"Oh," said the stranger, "I am a citizen of Schweidnitz, and hack wood for my amusement and for exercise (for I suffer from a liver complaint), more than for the wages. If you will only give as much wood as I can carry away at one time, I will charge you very little indeed."

"Now I call him a simpleton indeed," said the baker, as laughing in his sleeve, and thinking he had made a good bargain, he took the stranger into his room, made him sit down, and poured him out a glass of warm beer.

The stranger looked inquisitively round the fine room, whose walls were lined with high cupboards, full of beautiful things, and as he looked at the tapestry and hangings, he said,

"In good sooth! I have never seen such a fine room in all my life. These things, of course, come from Breslau, sir?"

"No, there are clever people in Hirschberg too," said he, "if you can pay for them."

Then the would be Schweidnitz citizen took his leave. He would come the next day, he said, and begin his work; and sure enough the next morning, as the baker was getting out of bed, he heard a loud noise of hacking, so he put on his dressing-gown and said,

"I will just see if it is all right."

But when he got to the house door, he stood staring with his mouth wide open, for the

strange woodcutter had taken his left leg out of its socket, and was knocking the wood with it, making it fly into a thousand pieces. The baker began to be furious, and he called out to the stranger to leave off, and depart from the place, but he seemed as if he did not hear, and still went on with his work, and before a quarter of an hour was over, every bit of wood was split up into small pieces. Then he put his leg into its place, piled all the wood in one immense heap, tied it on his back, and walked quietly out of the yard, without troubling himself to attend to the shouts of the baker.

The baker stood as one petrified; all his wood was gone—he had promised the woodcutter that he should have as much as he could carry away at one time. The man had done so, and on that ground the baker could not detain him; but what mostly kept him from running after him, was the conviction that none but Number Nip would have played him such a trick, and he did not relish fighting with him. So there he stood, and could do nothing but stare, and when he was tired of that, he began to wish that he had paid a little more to other labourers.

Number Nip, in the meantime, unloaded himself before the door of the poor peasant, who could not imagine who had brought him so much wood for his winter fires, without his having seen the person who brought it; but he thankfully made use of it, and also gave his poor neighbours some. Henceforward the rich baker was a changed man; and if ever he showed symptoms of his former faults, he had only to think of his adventure with the strange woodcutter, to make him kind and keep him to his word with his workmen.

WHY IT IS BEST TO BEAR WRONG PATIENTLY.

WO turners, belonging to Voigtland, were once returning over the mountains from foreign lands to their own homes. They were tired and thirsty. All at once they perceived a tree loaded with apples. This was very strange; as fruit seldom grows so high up the mountains. A little peasant boy was standing under the tree, shaking down the apples. The wayfarers asked him if he would sell them some.

"Yes; why not?" replied the boy, and gave them each a handful for a groschen.

They had not gone far, before they took a bite into their apples, but they found them hard as a stone, and when they knocked them together they sounded like flints.

"The peasant has played us a trick," said one, throwing down his apples. "Let us put them all in a heap, and cover them over with grass and moss," said the other, "so that no one else may be deceived as we have been." And this they did, for they were generous, kind-hearted men.

"I tell you what," began the first again, "I think the little peasant was the lord of the mountains, of whom so many queer stories are told, so we may be thankful that he did not play us a worse trick."

"Ah, you are right," replied the other; "but it is our own fault that he has misled us at all. It was very stupid of us to think that apples could grow so high up there, where not even a pine-tree can live."

As they were carefully covering up their stone apples with earth and leaves, they perceived something glittering in the heap, and on looking closer they found two large gold pieces lying amongst the rubbish.

The good Voigtlanders took these very thankfully, for they found plenty of use for them, as they had a long way still to go before they reached home.

HOW NUMBER NIP HELPED A STUDENT.

amongst the mountains, all was very different from what it is now. No ignorant or untaught youth could find a good situation, even were his friends in a high station at court, for there was not much court influence then. Every young man had to learn some sound and good business, if he wished to make his way in the world; and even in that case it was difficult enough to succeed.

Consequently, there were numbers of poor students who were obliged to sit industriously at their books, only perhaps to obtain a paltry office at last. These Number Nip willingly aided, provided they were not noisy, crackbrained rascals, brawling from street to street, and fighting duels.

Once, one of the students whom Number Nip liked, was walking, deep in thought, through the mountains. A man, whose appearance was that of a pedlar, approached, and fell into conversation with him. This man interrogated the student concerning his prospects in life; and the young man was not proud, but said frankly, that he was poor, and that he earned his daily bread by writing and copying; that he had a poor mother, who washed and cooked for other students; and that he was just then in great trouble, for he had not money enough to buy a certain book which was necessary for pursuing his studies.

The man listened to him with interest; sought to comfort him, and was much pleased to think that he possessed that very book, and even had it with him. Then he called to a servant behind him, who carried a large knapsack, took the book out of it, and presented it to the student. And now who so happy as he? He would like to have begun it directly, had not the traveller been with him. As, however, he at last took leave of him, the happy student sat down under an overhanging rock, and diligently began studying his new treasure.

This he continued every day; there was not a more industrious worker in the whole college. One day an acquaintance of his offered him twelve thalers for the book. For that sum the poor student could have supported himself without any trouble for a long time; but he would not part with the volume, for he said he should one day be richer, if he only studied more, and that the book was a rich source of learning for him.

Before a month was over, the young man knew the book's contents by heart. When he came to the last page of it, there lay a banknote between the leaves, worth two hundred thalers; it was wrapped in delicate paper, on which was written,

"A little remembrance from 'Mr. John.'"

Thus he was able to continue his studies without farther difficulty, and in time he became a great and learned man.

THE THREE BEST MEN.

NE day, Number Nip, in his wanderings, came to the boundaries of his kingdom.

"How would it be," thought he, "If I were to stay here for the night?" Perhaps I might meet with an amusing adventure;" and so saying, he entered a small roadside inn.

There sat three men round a table, drinking a bottle of wine; and enjoying themselves exceedingly. Number Nip joined them, and begged them to proceed in their conversation, one of them accordingly began:

"I am a servant from Dunkelsbuhl, in Swabia, and as there is peace in the land now, I am going into the wide world, to perform deeds which will astonish mankind; and I would advise no one to doubt my greatness, for I am the best man in the world, and I cannot bear to be contradicted. I always beat those who contradict me, and people don't like that."

The other then said he was from Silesia, and had been a cloth-weaver in Goldberg, but had left that town for some slight reason, and was now in search of other work.

"I am in reality the best man in the world," said he; "but one day my master began to scold me, and I struck his head with my iron, so he complained of me to the magistrate, and I escaped, in order not to get put in the stocks."

"I am a miller," said the third, when he was asked, "and I am certainly the best man in the world, only I cannot bear injustice. If one of the flour-bins chanced to be open, I used to put in a small measure and take some out. My master was very angry at this, and he sent me away, because he said I stole all the flour from him."

"Well, we have all had pretty much the same fortune in the world. How would it be if we were to go a little way together?"

The others agreed, and presently they laid themselves snugly down on the straw. Whilst they were soundly sleeping, Number Nip looked at them attentively, and said to himself,

"Why did I not make this discovery sooner? Once, I should have been content could I have

found one best man in the world, and now here I have come upon three at once!"

The next morning, the three best men set out on their way, and Number Nip charmed a piece of gold into each of their pockets, so that they might be well provided on their road.

Some time after, the mountain Spirit thought, "I should like to know where the three best men in the world are; and how goes it with them."

And lo! scarcely had this thought entered his mind, when he perceived the Goldberg weaver coming along. Number Nip quickly changed himself into a sportsman, and began a conversation with the young man.

- "But why do you travel alone? Have you met with no companions?"
- "Yes, two, but we could not agree; yet why should I trouble myself about that? I have heard that my master is dead, and since therefore he can do me no harm, I am returning to Goldberg, whence I came."
- "Is not that a large and beautiful town?" asked the sportsman. "I come from Swabia, and have only been here two days."

Ah! then I can impose upon you," thought the Goldberger; so he said, "Ah, there are many wonderful things in my native town, especially the Town Hall. It is eleven thousand feet high, and the chimney of the tower is one thousand feet high. When it wants sweeping, the sweep requires a day and a half to do it in; so that he has to sleep in it for a night, and a little room is built halfway up the chimney for that purpose."

"You rascal," thinks Number Nip to himself, "you sha'n't go from me unpunished." But the Goldberger boldly continued his lies. At last they came to Krummenhubel, where the sun was brightly gilding the tall mountains as it rose above them.

A number of men were collected at the entrance of the town; and the cloth-weaver, in a condescending manner, began to salute them. But the men put their hands to their sides, and laughed, till it echoed again and again through the mountains. He looked like a cross-bill; a great nose was on his face, out of which there grew a crowd of little noses. He saw this as he happened to pass by a large tub of water, and it nearly frightened him to death.

He clasped his hands over his face, and

rushed into the wood, followed by the laughter of the young people.

The whole of that night the Goldberger hid himself, and it was only hunger which at last drove him back again amongst men. There a sportsman met him, who said, laughing,

"Ah! you have been in the clutches of the mountain Spirit; your nose is decidedly not a natural one!"

"Ah! yes, I think the stranger I met was Mr. John himself. O dear! if I were only free from this terrible nose, I would never tell lies again."

"Agreed! so it shall be, my boy," cried the sportsman; "but keep your word," and he disappeared through the tall corn. At the same time the Goldberger had his natural face again.

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THE PERIWIGS.

ashamed of their native country, no fashion or dress was handsome or good enough unless it came from France. The mode of dressing the hair also came thence; and men and women wore wigs, either to hide their grey or their scanty locks, so that they might look young, although time had given them many a reminder that they were now so no longer.

When Number Nip heard of this nonsense, he set out for Hirschberg, where the annual fair was being held, and there transformed himself into a seller of these wigs. Presently a young man came up, who seemed very much to want one, and he asked Number Nip whether he had the sort he wanted.

"Plenty," answered he, "and all of the newest fashion; but they are very expensive."

The dandy looked with greedy eyes at the fine new wigs which Number Nip took from the pack one after another; and could find no fault with them, except that they were too dear. At this Number Nip shrugged his shoulders, and began to repack the expensive wigs.

"Hold!" cried the fop; "I will have one, though. Because then I shall be the first to set the fashion."

So he paid the extravagant price without any further delay; and returned home well pleased with himself. The tidings spread all through the town like wildfire, that new wigs were to be had; and every silly fellow who possessed the money bought himself one, so that the pedlar soon sold all his periwigs, and left the fair.

In the afternoon, the young men strutted about with their new purchases, and our young fop thought to himself, "How astonished folks will be when they first see my beautiful peruke."

As he was walking very proudly, and with perfect self-satisfaction along the street, where there were a number of great and beautiful ladies sitting at the windows of the houses, a peasant man called out to him, "My good friend, what have you got on your head? Some one has played you a trick," and pointed to the wig. Then the street boys ran after him, shouting and laughing; and even the old people laughed outright when they saw the young gentleman. At last he ran into a house, took off the wig and looked at it in astonishment, for it had become a perfect tangle of moss, hay, and shavings. In the meantime all the buyers of the much-wished-for wigs had fared no better, and hubbub and shouts of laughter resounded through all the streets of the town.

Although Number Nip had played his trick very well, it was not of much use, for sometimes even up to this time, people are not ashamed of turning themselves into monkeys; and it would not be a bad thing if the mountain Spirit were to come again and teach them better.

THE ORPHANS.

ever could pluck some particular flower from Number Nip's garden, would be rich and happy ever after. It must, however be done always on Midsummer night, for on any other night Number Nip would break the intruders' necks.

"But it must be an orphan. And no bad man may do it," continued the narrator.

Now, in the inn where this was said, there was a pair of twins, who were orphans, and the master of the house had taken care of them out of pity. One of the twins was a boy, and when he heard this he thought:

"I will try; and if I succeed, my little sister and the good brewer also, who has been so kind to us, shall be rich and happy."

Without saying a word to any body, Joseph, for that was the lad's name, slipped out of the

room, put a piece of bread in his pocket, and left the village with grand expectations, and started for the mountains, for Midsummer night was at hand. When he got to a village near, the landlord of an inn where he stopped, asked him where he wanted to go so late at night, and the boy frankly told him his intention. A man who was sitting comfortably by a table, drinking a bottle of tokay, heard him say this; and when Joseph had continued his way a little farther, he ran after him.

"We will go together," said he to the boy.
"I am also going to-night into Number Nip's garden."

Joseph looked at the comfortable-looking man, who appeared so round and well fed, and thought,

"What can he want to make him happier? He is the rich merchant from Breslau, who was there all last night, sitting up to drink and play at cards until past three o'clock in the morning."

They continued their way together. It was a lovely night, and all was quiet and still, and from the villages embosomed in the valley the clocks were striking the evening hour. Then, as was the boy's custom, he piously folded his

hands in prayer, but the stranger was thinking of all the riches which he could get by obtaining the flower. Presently they arrived at Number Nip's pleasure garden, and in a moment they perceived the blossoms of the plant shining in the darkness; and the man fell greedily upon them, tearing them up by handfuls.

Suddenly, from behind a rock, an old man with a silvery beard, approached, and he called out, "Hold!" in a voice like thunder.

The merchant trembled all over, and stood as though rooted to the ground; but the youth went quietly up to the old man, and begged that he would allow him to take two blossoms away with him.

The man looked kindly at the boy, and asked him why he wished for exactly two, and no more.

Then Joseph told him how he land his sister were orphans, and how they wanted to be rich and happy, so that they need no longer be a burden to their kind protector, and it was only for that, that he begged two little flowers.

Then the old man became still more kind, and himself plucked a stalk of the wished-for flowers, and put it into the boy's hand, and also stuffed his pockets with them, telling him to take care and not to lose them. When this was done, and Joseph had thanked his kind friend a thousand times, the old man asked the merchant, "And who art thou?"

The man replied that he was poor, and had also come there to make his fortune.

"Miserable wretch!" interrupted the old man, "dost thou believe that I would make such a bad man as thou art, rich? Depart! it is only for pure innocent orphans that my flowers grow."

The man trembled in the old man's presence, but he did not relish having taken the trouble to climb up the mountain to get nothing for it; so he replied that he was also an orphan, that his father had been killed in the battle of Moscow before he had reached the age of twelve years. He had scarcely spoken these words, when the old man became furious, and seizing him by the neck, threw him headlong from the rock.

"Abominable liar!" cried he, and his voice sounded like distant thunder, drowning the groans of the wicked merchant, which, however, were soon for ever hushed. But the boy sank terrified on his knees, and prayed; and then the old man took him by the hand, speaking kindly to him, and led him beyond the boundary of the garden.

In the meantime Joseph's friends in Seydorf were very anxious about him, and especially did his sister rejoice when he returned safe and sound, bringing with him whole handfuls of the wonderful plant. He divided them equally between himself and the brewer, and on the following morning, every leaf had been changed into pure gold. There was now no happier brother or sister in the whole world. Joseph was the richest man in the village, but he never forgot Number Nip's kind help to him, nor the frightful end of the wicked merchant.

THE WICKED NOBLEMAN.

HE nobleman on whom Number Nip had already played a trick by bringing an oak-tree and laying it before his door, continued still hard-hearted to the poor; and once, when times were bad, and a peasant came and took one of the deer or other animals from his property, he determined to be revenged on him.

If a stag came into a poor man's field, and ate up his seed, and the poor man killed it, considering it as his own, then for punishment he would very often have him tied between the antlers of a stag, and sent forth into the woods and forests, and so he was compelled to remain until the animal got free from him in some way.

"Only come into my mountains, I'll punish you!" thought Number Nip.

Well, one day this really happened. The nobleman commanded that a great hunt should take place; and he did not notice how far he went, nor whose boundaries he overstepped. He soon crossed into Number Nip's dominions; who as he heard the halloo of the drivers, and the sound of the horns, thought to himself, "Ha! now is my time!"

So he went up to the nobleman, and asked him who gave him permission to hunt upon ground which was not his own. The nobleman was astounded at the boldness of the stranger, and giving him a blow, commanded the hunters who were on the spot to seize the man. Number Nip, however, stood very quietly, and fixed his eyes on them, and as he gazed, one and all became stiff and dumb.

Then the nobleman grew into a great rage; he drew out his hunting knife and was going to run it through the person nearest to him, when Number Nip seized hold of him in such a manner, that he could move neither hand nor foot. He then repeated to him the whole list of crimes which he had committed, and when that was over, told him this was his last hunt; after which the mountain Spirit disappeared,

having first thrown the nobleman down on the ground with such force that all his bones creaked again.

Scarcely was Number Nip gone, when hunters and riders unstiffened, and came to life again. They made a bier out of branches, laid their master on it, and carried him home. Then in the castle, there was great distress, but in the village there was great joy. The doctor scarcely knew what to prescribe for his patient, and first he ordered one thing, and then another.

The nobleman was compelled to take shovels full of powders, and saucepans full of pills as large as balls, but all was of no use; he was bled, and then he was dieted, and had to livelike a sparrow. This gave the finishing stroke to this noble lord, who at last became so altered and quiet, that he said,

"It is all over with me; give me my sword to put by my side, that I may die like a nobleman!"

"Give him his spurs too!" cried one of his friends, "for a nobleman who is going to appear before his Chief ought to have these also."

The servants were astonished that their master had a chief, for they had never heard

of it before; and in their simple hearts they rejoiced at it. They put on his boots and spurs for him, his sword by his side, and his shield at his feet. Then the sick man died quietly. Suddenly there was a knock, and a stranger entered, who said he was a clever physician, and he wished to try whether there was really no life in the nobleman. But it was our friend Number Nip again, and when he touched the dead body, it immediately fell into a heap of ashes, and neither sword, nor shield, nor silver spurs were anywhere to be found.

The application of this story is surely clear to every one.

THE PIC-NIC.

MERRY company, staying at Warmbrunn, resolved one morning that they would make an excursion up the mountains before they left the place. So meat and wine were packed up. The morning was fine, the travellers were in high spirits, and the ladies joined in the songs and merriment of the gentlemen. They passed Giersdorf, and reached the paper mill in the wood. Near there they rested, and dealt unmercifully with the eatables they had brought with them. Then they continued their way, and soon they had reached the Teufel Meadow, where there was much shricking and laughter, for the fine clothes of the ladies got many a dirty speck from the mud there; but all this only added to the universal fun and frolic.

At last the whole party stood on the top of

the mountain, and they beheld the lovely view lying in the sun's rays at their feet. Now their merriment reached the highest pitch, and because they had been so favoured by the weather, and no mishap had befallen them, a sweet, lively young girl seized her wine-glass and cried out, "Let us wish good health and give many thanks to good Number Nip!"

Scarcely were the words past her lips, than a storm burst forth; so that the whole party was thrown into great confusion, and the wind was so violent they were scarcely able to keep their feet.

After much risk of falling down the precipices, they began their way back; but from all sides resounded shrieks of laughter; and only on reaching the end of the meadow did the clear blue sky of Heaven again shine over the wet and dripping travellers.

"You may consider yourselves lucky," said an old man, one of their guides, "that the mountain lord has not broken one of your necks, for nobody ever escapes unpunished, who mentions the name of Number Nip upon the mountains; but most dangerous of all is it upon the Snow Head, and in the Pleasure Garden."

They passed the night in Warmbrunn, happy to have escaped so easily from the bad weather and Number Nip's clutches; but the next morning, while the gentlemen were bathing, they related to the others, their adventure on the mountains, and how Number Nip had terrified them.

"You may be thankful," replied a stranger, whom, for the first time, they perceived amongst them, "if you find the mountain Spirit has played you no worse trick."

"Oh, we received no other harm," replied one, as he got out of the bath.

But, oh, horrible! how terrified were the whole company, when they perceived that the man was black from head to foot! And yet greater was their astonishment, as one after the other got out of the bath, all of the same black hue, and found that no washing powder or alkali could get them clean.

A whole day were they compelled to go about like negroes, and then, they had to bear the mockery of the others; but the next morning, on entering the bath, the fatal colour suddenly disappeared, at which they all danced for joy.

"It was too bad of him." But who that "him" was, no one dared to say, for they were afraid.

A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING.

very wild, and a great plague to everybody, so that no one would take him into his service. At last he went into the army, but he succeeded no better there; it was about the time of the Thirty Years' War, and consequently he was more able to continue his evil practices unpunished.

Number Nip had often heard poor people complain of him; for whenever there was anything stolen or destroyed, this youth was not far off. He took care never to go near the Giant Mountains until he was wounded and carried past them to the hospital of Schmiedeberg. Then it was the soldier's great delight to say:

"Now they must do me honour when I die, for they will have to shoot three times across my coffin."

Soon he died, and no one was sorry for it; but still they were obliged to bury him with all military honours, and the soldiers came with their lances and guns, to carry him to the grave, and there was the drummer with his muffled drum. On the hospital floor, however, stood two coffins, for one of the old nurses had also died, and was to be carried to her last home.

When the soldiers were ready, the principal of the hospital pointed to one of the coffins, and said, "There he is." Then the men lifted up the coffin on their shoulders, the drums were beaten, and behind the bier marched the men, playing solemn music. In the churchyard the parson spoke of how the dead person was liberated from his earthly chains, and was now in the presence of his Maker. Then the warriors fired thrice over the grave, and again the drums beat, causing a whole herd of geese to fly over the heads of the assembly. When it was all over, every one returned to their homes.

The parson returned to the hospital, in order to fetch the body of Anna, the nurse. A number of old women had assembled round the coffin, and were howling and lamenting. After blessing the corpse, it was in those days the

custom to uncover it, so that people might see their dear friend once more. Suddenly there was a shriek of surprise, and every one rushed away as though bereft of his senses: for when they looked in the coffin, they saw no other than the wicked soldier, stiff and rigid, with his leather collar and military cap and sword by his side.

The bearers had taken away the wrong coffin at first, and so they had fired and drummed over old Anna.

But folks thought it could not have been done by accident; Number Nip must have had something to do with his death; so that the young soldiers might take example, and not forget that, though soldiers, they were human beings.

This was universally believed, but no one knew for certain.

THE JEW.

OME Jews once sold goods to Number Nip, not knowing who he was. The merchandize was very bad; but they sold it at an enormous price, and were rejoicing over the unusual size of the gold pieces which he had paid them. When they arrived at the next inn on their journey, they entered it, and ordered a private room where they might shut themselves up to cut the money in pieces, which they always did when they had ducats.

As one of them took a knife in his hand to cut away the edge of one of the pieces, the knife slipped, and went right through the coin, so that it fell in two. One piece fell on the floor, and in spite of all their searching, they could not find it again. The same thing happened to the second and third pieces, so in this manner they lost all that they had so deceitfully earned.

One of the money-changers, thinking he would be more clever than the others, took a file and filed the gold-dust into a plate; but to his great vexation, he filed more than he intended, so that the stamp on the gold was spoiled, and the dust, which he wanted to collect carefully, remained clinging to his hands, and he could not get it off, do what he would. But what amazed and plagued the Jew more than anything was that he had the gold on his hands, and yet could make no use of it!

THE HERB GATHERER.

ONG, long ago, in the village of the Giant Mountains there dwelt an old couple: Bieder, who was a charcoal burner, and Alice his wife. They were poor, so no one thought much about them; and they lived in a little tumble-down hut. They had no children, and scarcely any relations; for poverty has but one friend, Who dwells in Heaven. It is true there was a sister of the charcoal burner's, but she lived in Bohemia with her daughter, and was a poor widow, who procured her bread by very hard toil.

No one troubled their heads then very much about this aged couple, and the bright sun-light was much oftener in their dwellings, than a piece of black bread; and poor Alice often spun her yarn with many tears of sorrow; for her good man lay before her, helpless with rheumatism,

and his lame hands could no longer aid his wife by holding the spindle for her as he used to do. Indeed, their necessity was often very great, for Alice was obliged to watch and nurse the sick man, and therefore she no longer had time to spin a whole skein of her finest wool in one day.

When the linen merchant passed her door, and tapped at the tiny lattice, Alice would shake her head sadly; for she had no linen to sell, or it was so little that she gained only two groschen by it, and that scarcely sufficed to buy even bread and salt. And so, in suffering and want, time passed with these poor old people.

One day, old Bieder sat at the door of his hut, and warmed his shrunken limbs in the sun's rays. Alice brought him his pipe, with the bowl made of wood; then she took distaff and spindle, and seated herself on the wooden bench by the side of the old man. Along the road whirled fine carriages, which raised a thick dust as they drove quickly onward, taking the road which led to the mineral spring, whose celebrated baths had restored many thousands to health and strength.

"Ah!" sighed old Alice, "if only we were

rich, like those grand travellers, you could bathe in the warm baths also, and your diseased limbs would become robust and healthy once more."

Bieder bent his head despondingly; and when Alice saw her husband so cast down, she tried to comfort him, and raising her weak and trembling voice, she commenced Neumark's beautiful hymn, "Who only trusts in God."

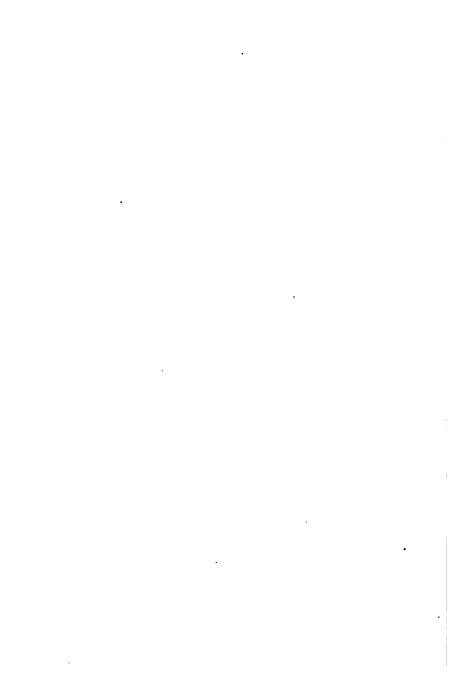
"Do you know," interrupted she, "what our pastor told me lately about this beautiful hymn? George Neumark lived in Hamburg in such great poverty, that at last he was obliged to pawn his darling violin. But one day he met with unexpected benefactors, who kindly aided him, and obtained him a situation. Then he was enabled to get his violin back again, and in his joy, he composed the hymn, 'Who only trusts in God,' which he himself sang for the first time amid tears of gratitude."

While relating this story, Alice's own castdown heart rose high; and her countenance expressed calm submission, as she came to the last line of the hymn, "For whose puts his trust in God, will never be forsaken."

Presently there came along the road, a beautiful



The stranger-maiden fell on his neck and sobbed. [face p. 248.



maiden, who carried a little bundle of clothes under her arm. She seemed to be very tired, and her shoeless feet were torn by the stones and thorns in many places. When she came to the hut she stopped, and said, "God watch over you;" and asked in a foreign, or rather a strange accent,

"Can you tell me whether there dwells near here a man of the name of Bieder?"

"That is my name," replied the old man, and immediately the stranger maiden fell on his neck and sobbed.

"Dear uncle, my mother remembered you before she died. Last Easter she was buried."

"Dead?" asked Bieder, surprised, and he folded his hands. "Great God! then you are Therese's child? You are truly welcome."

At this Alice came up, took the maiden's hand, and gently put back the thick curls which hung in profusion over her face, and patted her cheek. Then the young girl took her aunt's hand, and begged in a soft voice,

"Oh, be my dear mother, aunt Alice; see, I am without shelter in this wide, wide world, like a little bird in the woods."

"For you also, will our Father care," said the

good Alice; and embracing the forsaken and destitute orphan, she led her into the hut to rest, and gave her some bread and cheese. In the evening the good couple made Susy a bed of hay and leaves; and, poor as this was, the maiden slept as sweetly as though she lay on the softest down.

But Alice could not sleep for sorrow; and early in the morning, she went out of the hut, there to weep and pray unseen, and then to seek strawberry leaves to make some morning drink for her husband and herself; but she spared a drop of milk for Susy.

It is true that Alice would have support now and help from her new daughter, but first of all there were many things which the maiden required, and these the troubled Alice knew not how to procure. Poor Susy had been compelled to leave all her linen and clothes behind her, to the hard-hearted people of the house where her mother died, to whom, through her long illness she owed a great deal.

True Susy was lovely and blooming as a mountain rose; besides which, she had a clear, silvery voice, and knew how to sing many beautiful songs, which she accompanied with her guitar, but sooner would Alice have begged for the maiden, than that she should have gained her bread in that way. But how to obtain food for her sustenance? The good woman saw no means, and she forgot that One who dwells on high can find a thousand ways while our small understanding cannot see one.

Suddenly Alice heard a man's voice in the silent forest, and in another moment there came out a herb gatherer, with his tin case upon his back. He did not appear to remark Alice, but sang loud and distinctly enough for any one to hear:

"Against Earth's painful wounds, There is a plant of power; And he shall healing find, Who owns this little flower.

"Near Faith's peaceful garden,
It grows in holy sod;
Seek for that little plant,
'Tis callèd 'Trust in God.'"

Alice listened, her heart beat loud, and Faith, strong as a rock, seemed to rise within her. She felt ashamed of her despondency; and so, drying her tears, she replied cheerfully to the salutations of the wayfarer, who now approached her.

"Do you require any of my merchandize?"

asked he of Alice, pointing to his herb basket; but she shook her head sadly and replied:

"Ah, my friend, the little herb that I require, is not in your basket. There is no herb which is an antidote for death; and my husband will never lose his illness until the sod covers him in his grave."

The stranger smiled in a curious manner, and repeated the words which he had sung before.

Alice took great courage at this, and asked the herb gatherer whether he had in reality a cure for her husband's malady; and willingly promised him the twenty kreutzer piece which she had worn round her neck ever since the day of her Confirmation. The stranger went with her into the house, where Susy had already risen and opened the window, and made the sick man's bed, and swept out the dust. The herb gatherer looked kindly at her.

"Is that your daughter?" he asked of Alice, who was giving him a seat, which she had wiped clean with her apron.

"No, kind sir," replied she; "She is the child of my sister-in-law, who lived in Bohemia; but now her mother is dead, so she is an orphan, and she only arrived here yesterday." All this while, Susy and her uncle were looking at the man in astonishment. Then the young girl took the heavy pack from off his back, and was so nimble and active, that it was quite a pleasure to look at her. Presently, the stranger took out of his case, a green twining plant, and told Alice to boil it, and wash the limbs of the sick man with it; but he would take no payment, and would only stay to rest in the cottage for an hour. Susy made great haste to boil the plant, and prepare the bandages, and when that was done she asked what she should do next.

"Can you spin, my child?" asked her aunt. But the maiden shook her head. "Very well; then I will teach you," said Alice, and was beginning to do so when the stranger said:

"I will teach the maiden an easier way to spin than yours. She shall empty the full reels sooner than even you can, good mother."

Alice smiled incredulously; but the herb gatherer went out, and in a little while returned with a spinning wheel, fashioned in a manner that the poor charcoal burners had never before seen. He showed the attentive Susy how she must roll the fine thread over the iron shuttle, and then he made the young girl a present of the noisy whizzing little machine. He also told her he would send her another cotton merchant, who would pay better for her spinning than the other one. After this he hastily left the little family, who saw their benefactor disappear amidst the thick foliage of the forest.

Whilst Susy worked from morning till night, she would sing old Bohemian ditties; and she turned the wheel so quickly that Alice and her uncle would gaze in astonishment, for the industrious Susy never broke her threads.

Thus some time passed; the herb gatherer did not return, nor could the linen merchant who came every Saturday give them any information, although he had sent him to them.

The sick man, too, became better and better every day; very soon he was able to move his lame limbs; and at last, through the wonderful cure of the herb gatherer, he became perfectly well and healthy again.

Then he began to work and carpenter. Soon he had made a similar wheel for Alice, and she worked at it with her darling Susy; so that every week they gained more money and were enabled to put some small sum by. Father Bieder employed himself in making spinning-wheels, as he succeeded so well in his first attempt; and so much were they in request, that he could not make them fast enough. He was well paid for them; and soon the good people became very prosperous by their industry and economy.

And now old Alice did not like her dear adopted daughter to sleep on straw; and she went with her savings to the yearly fair at the nearest town, secretly to buy a feather bed for her. But the little sum was not enough, and the good old creature was standing sadly considering, when suddenly she saw the herb gatherer coming through the crowd. She seized his hand, related to him how her husband was healed, and thanked him a thousand times for his kind aid; she was just going to tell him how industrious her dear Susy was, when he disappeared, and she held, instead of his hand, a little leathern purse, which contained exactly the sum of money required to complete her purchase of the bed.

Who could describe the astonishment and the joy of good Alice! She soon bought the bed;

and a young countryman, whose way led past Alice's cottage, took her home in his cart along with the treasure. Susy was just then sitting at the open window, turning the swift wheel and singing one of her native songs, as the young peasant stopped before the cottage. He listened in astonishment to the industrious Susy's clear song. But no sooner did she observe her aunt's arrival, than she ran joyfully out, to lend a helping hand in carrying the bed into the house.

Peter (thus was the young man named) offered his services, but all the time he could not take his eyes off the bright blooming face before him. His horses had to stay a long time before the door, for the grateful Alice made him come in; and at his request Susy sang the song over again, in the middle of which she had been disturbed by her aunt's arrival.

When the young peasant at last took a slow lingering leave, he thought how happy he might be with such a bright happy face always beside him. His father and mother were dead; and his fine fields and possessions always seemed to him very solitary and empty. In short, after a few weeks he went in his

Sunday clothes to the aged Bieder, and asked him to give him Susy for his wife.

He was a respectable good youth, who was likely to make the young girl happy; therefore he also obtained her consent to his request, on condition that she should be allowed to take her foster parents with her to her new home; and be able to take care of them and reward all their love.

To this Peter willingly consented, and the wedding took place at Easter. On the very same day on which a year before poor Susy had arrived, desolate and disconsolate, she was taken to her pretty new house, where a happy life awaited her.

Only one thought troubled Susy's happiness; she was so poor, that she could not take any linen, as is the custom. Industriously as she had worked, she had always been obliged to sell all the linen which she had made, in order to buy food and raiment for her foster parents and herself. She was very much distressed at this, and thoughtfully buried her face in her hands.

All at once, there was a tap at the window panes; and the strange cotton merchant peeped

in. But when she looked out, he was gone, and there on the floor lay six bales of the finest linen, and on a little paper attached were written these words: "A wedding present for the industrious Susy."

Whoever could have seen the surprised bride, how she wept for joy, and fell now on her aunt's and now on her uncle's neck, and was blithe as a child, would have envied poverty its happy privilege of being made so profoundly happy by such a small cause.

And now Susy sewed and hemmed and snipped right heartily; yet the merchant never came again; but they all thought of him as well as of the herb gatherer with grateful hearts.

At last the wedding day arrived, and all went well; but when Susy came out of the church with her handsome bridegroom, looking indescribably beautiful, with the budding myrtle in her waving hair, and while all the spectators were envying Peter's good fortune in having such an industrious, kind-hearted, and beautiful wife, suddenly the herb gatherer stood before the bridal pair.

He presented Susy with a freshly budding nosegay, saying, "Industry, Faith, and Meek-

ness are the best dowry for a bride; worth more than many thousand sovereigns. This bouquet will never fade while thou possessest these three things, and then thou wilt be for ever happy."

When he had said this, the form of the herb gatherer dissolved into mist, and throughout the whole assembly the name of "the Lord of the Mountains" resounded again and again in the air.

NUMBER NIP.—A DRAMA.

SCENE I.

A STORM.

(Number Nip rises from the earth and peers curiously about him.)

NUMBER NIP.

OF the Giant Mountains king,
And right well known throughout the land,
At wicked deeds my arrows fling,
And punish with a heavy hand.
After long years I come at last,
And in this world again appear,
To know how time has with it passed,

And all the novelties to hear.

Many a tale and legend odd, Folks, I hear, have told of me;

And if these stories have done good Is what I've now come up to see. Yet men, I fancy, have of late
But sought for empty, outward show,

Making life sad through their deceit,

And spread, themselves, the seeds of woe!

Many, 'tis true, are very wise,

And know the sciences and arts;

But do they all possess the prize

Of conscience clear, and merry hearts?

Or they, themselves from troubles free,

To others strive to make life sweet,

And with the world at peace to be?

Just ask them all if they know that!
The children in the age we live,

Want me to come and set them right.

Before they reach the age of five,

They hold grand parties late at night;

And then if they in French excel,

They think 'tis all they need to know;

Their native stream they scarce can tell,

And yet will trace the Niger's flow;

A child will tell you to a hair Of Mutius Scaevola the Great:

If asked of Luther, they'll declare

They "have not heard of him as yet."

At that piano sits a maid,

And not one false note will she play—

Knows each new piece, but I'm afraid Her tables perfectly can't say.

And so it is now with all youth— Gone seems its sweet simplicity;

But I myself will learn the truth,

And here folks still my power shall see.

So now as erst, I used to roam,

I'll plague, and then reward the good,

But wicked people I'll pack home,

And punish them, as right I should.

See! here is just what I desire-

An aged woman comes this way,

Seeking dry wood to make her fire,

And for her goats some grass or hay;

Two pretty children follow her.

I'll hide myself behind this bush;

Perhaps I may the character

Find out of these poor people—hush!

[Number Nip conceals himself behind a bush.

SCENE II.

(Enter MOTHER and ELIZABETH).

MOTHER.

Thank God!—the storm is now quite over, The sun shines brightly out again.

ELIZABETH.

But you must have dry clothes, dear mother,

After this dreadful hurricane.

MOTHER.

We have but one dress in the house, And I am not as you so wet.

ELIZABETH.

But that dress, mother, you must use, For I am young and strong as yet.

MOTHER.

Well, let us rest, and then again
Work to increase our little store
'Gainst winter's cold and frost and rain.

ELIZABETH.

Oh, dear! if we were not so poor!

MOTHER.

Well say, then, would you like to be Rich as our landlord, neighbour Ralph?

ELIZABETH.

Oh, no, for he is miserly;

And closely locked he keeps his pelf.

MOTHER.

If, like our parson, I could give
My child a nice and pretty home!

ELIZABETH.

But Jane's not happy, I believe;
Her face seems oft o'ercast with gloom.

MOTHER.

The rich Eliza at the mill,
Maybe, you envy in your mind?

ELIZABETH.

Your lesson, now, I deeply feel;
Alas! her mother is stone blind.
Of my complaints I now repent;
I would not change; and it is just
That each and all have troubles sent.
Let us but in our good God trust;
Only for thy sake may He send
Us bright and happy days to cheer.

MOTHER.

Will you not then on Him depend?

If I Eliza's mother were!—

But, God be praised! I'm strong and well,

And able still to work and spin,

And my dear children they dispel

Sad thoughts which else might rise within.

(Enter Gustave.)

GUSTAVE.

Here are ripe berries, only see! Dear mother, they are all for you.

MOTHER.

Oh, no! Part is enough for me; You and Lizzie must have some too.

SCENE III.

(Enter Number Nip.)

GUSTAVE.

Oh, mother dear! there comes a stranger.

MOTHER.

Of that you need not be afraid.

Surely for us there is no danger,

We're doing nothing wrong or bad.

Number Nip.

Good day! What are you doing there?

MOTHER.

Collecting wood to make a fire, Our hut is very cold and bare.

NUMBER NIP.

Who are you?

MOTHER.

—A woman poor With two dear children good and kind.

And once we had a farm, good sir,
But the enemy left us naught behind;

They stole our cow, and then they burned All that away could not be taken.

Then to this place our steps we turned,
And five years have remained forsaken.

NUMBER NIP.

Are you a widow?

MOTHER.

God forbid!

NUMBER NIP.

Does your husband, then, his money spend? On drink, when he should be buying bread?

MOTHER.

Oh, no! While Thomas here remained

He toiled and worked from morn till night;
But war disturbed our Fatherland,

And Thomas went away to fight.

Good friend, five years and more have flown,

Since I have heard if he exist;

While we have lived here all alone,

And on my earnings small subsist.

NUMBER NIP.

Then now you only can believe

That he is murdered by his foes?

MOTHER. (Weeping.)

Of my last hope you me bereave;
Ah! strength and courage with it goes!

NUMBER NIP.

Yet, better he slept in his grave, Than live a beggar, weak and poor?

MOTHER.

Oh, that my husband I might have! My loving heart desires no more.

NUMBER NIP.

Yet if, when he returned, you found That Thomas a mere cripple was?

MOTHER.

Then we have bodies strong and sound, And Gustave now a great boy grows.

NUMBER NIP.

To venture here, methinks you're bold;

Do you not fear the mountain sprite?

MOTHER.

Oh, no! for I've been always told He never hurts folks who do right.

ELIZABETH.

The Gnome may come, sir, if he please; To see him we might e'en be glad.

Perhaps he might your troubles ease; Just now you seemed so very sad.

MOTHER.

But talking, sir, we've stayed too long,
For when approaches dim twilight,
'Tis bad to stay these rocks among.
Adieu!

NUMBER NIP.

Good luck be with you, dame! Good night!

MOTHER.

Ay, ay! What our God wills to send Is certain for our good to be.

GUSTAVE.

If a brown squirrel you should find, Will you give him, sir, to me?

NUMBER NIP.

Are you Gustave? Perhaps I will.

GUSTAVE.

I think that somewhat grim you are, And your great club is hard; yet, still Of you I have not any fear.

MOTHER.

Now, dearest Gustave, see, my child, Our basket's not yet full; so come, Let's try and quickly get it filled, Then to the vilage hasten home.

SCENE IV.

NUMBER NIP. (Alone.)

Tis an honest mother, with children good,
And kindly hearts they have, and pure;
Now oft to such a friend I've stood,
And helping these, am right, I'm sure.

 $\lceil Exit.$

(Night approaches; enter Thomas on crutches.)

THOMAS.

I can no farther go to-night;
So tired, I can hardly speak.
But the air is warm, and the stars are bright,
So under this rock I will lie and sleep.
By dawn, new strength my God will give
To me, to cross this mountain drear,
My last days peacefully to spend
In that quiet home I hold so dear.
'Tis true, I come with empty hand,
And cannot walk—I only hobble;
I can but idle be and spend,
I cannot earn—oh dear, what trouble!

Ah, why did that ball pierce my knee?

I would that it had ta'en my life!

Then, from all pain I should be free,
And no distress to my dear wife.

A burden and a trouble? No!
My children will their father aid,
And He who rules above, I know,
Will help us in our day of need.

But can I nothing earn?—Nay, why?
I still have hands, they're strong and free;
Or gladly, joyfully I'd die,
Could I once more my dear ones see!

[Lies down under a tree and sleeps.

NUMBER NIP.

'Tis he! some spirit good, I deem,
Has sent him to this spot to rest;
His loved ones he shall see in his dream
Till, waking, he clasp them to his breast.

THOMAS. (Waking.)

Help! Ah, where are my crutches gone?
Surely some cruel sprite has come,
And robbing, left me here forlorn!
Ah, now, how can I reach my home?
(Enter Number Nip.)

Who's lamenting there?

THOMAS.

Ah, good man!

Welcome a thousand times I say.

Just look, kind friend, there in the grass; Some villain has taken my crutches away.

NUMBER NIP.

Oh, the rogue! how could he do so.

THOMAS.

I am an old soldier, lame—alas! Without them I can no farther go.

NUMBER NIP. (Aside.)

I'll help thee, poor man, for I've plagued thee sore.

(Aloud.) Who are you then? Where is your home?

THOMAS.

I was badly wounded in the last war; Thomas I'm called; from Westphalia I come,

And my cot lies down in you valley, where Dwell my fond wife and little ones dear.

NUMBER NIP.

Are you that Thomas, who, five years ago, Was forced to go fight against his will?

THOMAS.

I am that same. Do you chance to know If my children are all safe and well?

NUMBER NIP.

The daughter, she was drowned in the stream, Soon after the boy of a fever died; Their poor mother, like a sapless stem, Withered away, and she sleeps by their side.

THOMAS.

Alas! alas! thou cruel ball!

Why through my heart didst thou not go?
Courageously I have borne all,

But now I sink in grief and woe!

[Falls down overcome with despair.

SCENE V.

(Enter Gustave.)

Stop, little bird, come here to me, Fly not away in terror wild.

THOMAS.

What rosy cheeks he has, now see— Oh, what a pretty darling child! 'Tis growing dark, have you no fear? How came you in this wood alone?

GUSTAVE.

My mother is not far from here.

THOMAS.

Ah, just his age would be my son!

GUSTAVE.

For winter fires dry wood we gather.

THOMAS.

Then, good folks, you are very poor?

GUSTAVE.

Yes, though industrious is our mother, Still often we're without a fire. THOMAS.

Your father can your mother aid?

GUSTAVE.

Ah, yes, if we a father had.

THOMAS.

No father?—where then is he gone?

GUSTAVE.

He went to fight ere I was born.

THOMAS.

How strange to me do these words sound! How all things have conspired to-day

My scattered senses to confound!

Ah, Gustave! Lizzie! where are they?

MOTHER.

Ho! Gustave!

THOMAS.

My wife's voice I hear!

MOTHER.

Gustave! where are you gone?

GUSTAVE.

Quickly I'm coming, mother dear.

THOMAS.

Oh, if I could but creep along!

How my heart beats 'twixt joy and fear!

GUSTAVE.

You should not sit so idly there, If mother you desire to see.

THOMAS.

My child, I'm lame, I cannot stir.

GUSTAVE.

Are you? support yourself on me.

THOMAS. (Rises.)

So, will you lead me to her now?

Ah, dare I hope, sweet thought, to her!

[Gustave supports Thomas with his arm.

There, now, then you can safely go;
I'm little, but I'm strong; look there!
(Enter MOTHER.)

MOTHER.

Where are you? Did you lose your way?

THOMAS.

Support me, child!—'tis she, my wife!

MOTHER.

Are my senses gone? What do I see?

ELIZABETH.

Our father!

THOMAS.

Yes! you're well and safe?

Ah, then, to me my wife is spared;

My children once again I see.

ELIZABETH.

Oh, joy! our prayers have been heard.

GUSTAVE.

Then you are father? Please kiss me.

FATHER.

Yes-thee did God as an angel send.

MOTHER.

Whence do you come?

THOMAS.

From a foreign land.

Ah, dearest wife! now look on me—
Helpless and sorrowful I am;

Oh, set me down beneath this tree;
I am a beggar, and—I'm lame!

MOTHER.

A beggar? nay, that cannot be; Six hands that hard can work are here. Children and wife belong to thee, While thou hast them, thou need'st not fear.

THOMAS.

Good God! my lasting thanks receive;
I've found them, and they love me yet;
But lame and useless must I live,
And be a burden and a weight.

MOTHER.

You embitter our joy thus sadly talking, You only need your legs for walking: Then help us now, and soon you'll prove, That power you have your hands to move. So, happy and joyful, we now will go By the well-known path to our cot below.

THOMAS.

Ah! you have given me new life; Where is the basket? Now, dear wife—

[Attempts to lift basket.

But strength is gone from me—'tis plain, To lift this basket I've no power.

ELIZABETH.

I'll help you, father, push it here; Wondrous! I also try in vain!

THOMAS.

You feign this, only to comfort me?

ELIZABETH.

No, dear father, I strive and strive,

But all in vain. Ah! mother, see— The wood is golden, as I live.

GUSTAVE.

Gold-gold! how beautiful and bright!

THOMAS.

Ah, kind and good is the mountain sprite! Surely from him this gift has come.

MOTHER.

A new life on us seems to dawn!

THOMAS.

The cripple need no longer mourn, How can we thank the kindly Gnome?

GUSTAVE.

Ah, sprite, to thee great thanks we owe!

MOTHER.

How glad I feel, I cannot say.

ELIZABETH.

But how can we take the gold away?

Night comes, and we have far to go,
And we must lead our father dear;

Sooner we'd leave the gold behind.

(Enter Number Nip.)

Oh, tell me now, good people here, Can you tell me my way to find?

MOTHER.

Ah, whither do you go so late?

NUMBER NIP.

I've travelled from a distant part,

And I am a physician great;
I'm going to Glatz to try my art.

A rich man dwells there I am told;
And years ago, it now must be,

When fighting in some battle bold,
A pistol ball went through his knee.

The wound, a quack devoid of skill
Tried, but tried in vain, to cure:

The rich man walks on crutches still,
And sends for me to try my power.

So with all speed I've hastened here,
And safely journeyed till to-day.

And now on foot I must make my way. Thomas.

But my coach wheel broke in the valley there,

Can you cure lame folks, sir, e'en if Several years have passed, and all The bones and muscles have grown stiff?

Friend, that is but a trifle small.

MOTHER.

Behold, of hope another ray!

NUMBER NIP.

But I charge dearly for my cures.

ELIZABETH.

Relieve him of his pain, I pray, And all we have, sir, shall be yours.

NUMBER NIP.

That would be little for my pains.

MOTHER.

This basket!---

THOMAS.

No, no! he assured
"Tis not worth that. E'en were I cured,
To give him all that it contains.

MOTHER.

We part with it with joy and pleasure.

NUMBER NIP.

What have you in the basket, say?

GUSTAVE.

Gold!

And would give it all away!

Like shavings old, instead of treasure?

MOTHER.

Ah, sir, a truly loving wife Can have no greater joy in life Than part with all she may possess To help her husband in distress.

GUSTAVE.

If you succeed I'll jump for joy.

ELIZABETH.

And I will sing aloud for pleasure.

THOMAS.

Though not cured, with this girl and boy I'm content, for they alone are treasure.

NUMBER NIP. (Aside.)

Ah! I am wondrously amazed! Spite of my spirit-life, I feel

My envy of mankind is raised.

Friend, I will try your wound to heal.

(Aloud.) And now you must your crutches throw

Far away in God's good name;

And very soon you'll feel, I know,
That you are no longer lame.
[Number Nip draws forth a box of ointment,
and rubs Thomas's knee.

MOTHER.

Ah, Number Nip, thy priceless gold!

THOMAS.

This shattered limb I feel—nay, hold!

New life and feeling through it bound,

Through every muscle, every bone;

The load which weighed me to the ground,

It seems as from my body gone!

GUSTAVE.

Ah, mother, I'll implore and pray! Of great use surely that will be?

THOMAS.

I move my foot.

NUMBER NIP.

Well, now then try— Try and stand alone; now see.

THOMAS.

My God! great thanks I owe to Thee! It has effect, and I am cured.

MOTHER.

Oh, sir, God's blessing on you be!

NUMBER NIP.

Nay, stop! Remember my reward; My balsam has done well, you see, And for the cure you now must pay.

ELIZABETH.

Here is the gold!

MOTHER.

'Tis yours, sir, take it all away.

NUMBER NIP.

"Tis said mankind, with trouble near, Will offer all their wealth for aid; But passed and gone their abject fear, They oft forget what they have said.

MOTHER.

No, the gold is yours; we would not steal.

ELIZABETH.

We would not take a single grain.

THOMAS.

The father's privilege I feel,

Now I can work for my darlings again!

[Mother and children embrace Thomas, during which Number, Nip changes to his own form, and slowly disappears. All raise their hands to him.

ALL.

'Tis Number Nip!—oh, kind good Spirit!!

[THE END.]



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